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ABSTRACT

In this high school U.S. government and U.S. history curriculum unit, students examine in depth the Monroe Doctrine. Detailed activities are provided to teach students about the origins of the Monroe Doctrine and its subsequent impact on U.S. foreign policy. The materials include informational handouts for students, background information for teachers, lesson ideas and outlines, black line masters, rubrics, application to civics and history standards, and primary source documents, including correspondences and diaries of key figures in the development of the Monroe Doctrine. (RJC)

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THE MONROE DOCTRINE

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Teaching **American Diplomacy** Using Primary Sources

Documents Collected and Edited by
Karen Volker
Teaching Materials Designed by
Linda Bongiorno
& Nicholas Psarakis

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CENTER FOR TEACHING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Teaching American Diplomacy

The Monroe Doctrine

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Teaching American Diplomacy Using Primary Sources

The curriculum series *Teaching American Diplomacy Using Primary Sources* is a collaborative project of the Center for Teaching International Relations (CTIR) and the Una Chapman Cox Foundation. Through a generous grant from the Cox Foundation, Ms. Karen Volker, a Foreign Service Officer with the US Department of State, compiled the documents that make up each of the units in this series. Ms. Volker also wrote the introductions and commentaries for the document sets. In an effort to make these documents more readily accessible to classroom teachers, the Cox Foundation engaged CTIR to create standards-based curriculum units to accompany the documents. These assessments and their accompanying activities were developed by classroom teachers of history and civics.

CTIR has drawn upon the standards outlined by the Center for Civic Education and the Mid-Continental Regional Educational Laboratory. Ms. Linda Bongiorno edited the series for CTIR.

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The Monroe Doctrine
Using Primary Sources

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Primary Source Documents

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THE MONROE DOCTRINE

In 1823, less than fifty years after the United States gained its independence, President Monroe set out a new foreign policy that became known as the Monroe Doctrine. While this doctrine set forth in concrete terms U.S. strategic interest in Latin America, the United States' commercial relations with those countries long pre-dated 1823. What's more, U.S. political interest in the region began with the independence movement more than 10 years earlier.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Would it be possible for the U.S. to issue a similar doctrine today?
- How would the U.S. react if China were to issue such a statement?
- How would modern communications have changed things?
- How is the Monroe Doctrine evident in U.S. foreign policy in the 1990's?
- Who is the author of the Monroe Doctrine?
- What events prompted the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine?
- How was the message received in America?

The doctrine, which was based on the principle of protecting individual freedom and promoting democracy, represented the first major change in foreign policy since George Washington warned against permanent alliances and remains a hallmark of U.S. foreign policy today. Many of the foreign policy decisions of the 19th and 20th centuries were and are premised on the belief – first expressed in the Monroe Doctrine -- that the United States has a special interest in what happens in the Western hemisphere.

From the Cuban missile crisis to U.S. involvement in Central America during the Cold War, U.S. policy toward Latin America has been shaped by the basic tenet of the Monroe Doctrine: that any attempt by a foreign power to extend its political system to this hemisphere is a threat to U.S. national security.

Since the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine – and some might argue because of it -- the United States and Latin America have shared a special relationship covering cultural, political, economic, and security issues. Regardless of where one lives in the United States, the results of this special relationship are visible in a wide range of areas, including the clothes we wear and the food we eat.

In the 1990's, the Monroe Doctrine has taken on a different character to respond to the changing political and economic situation. This is exemplified by the U.S. bailout after the Mexican peso crisis, the conclusion of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the push to extend NAFTA to include Chile and other Latin American nations, and efforts to curb illegal drug trafficking in the region.

Background

The Monroe Doctrine, however, was not created out of thin air. Indeed, there were several events that helped to frame the debate leading up to the enunciation of the doctrine. Of particular importance were the British overtures to the United States that the two countries should jointly declare that any attempt to interfere with the independence of the newly-independent states of Spanish America would not be tolerated, Russian refusal to recognize these new states and colonial claims on the northwest coast of the North American continent (modern-day Canada), and U.S. concerns that the Holy Alliance[1] wanted to restore the newly-independent states in South America to Spain and, in doing so, restore the monarchical system of government.

As several historians have noted, however, U.S. fears of the Holy Alliance were greatly exaggerated. Indeed, once the British had reached agreement with the French not to intervene in Latin America (the so-called Polignac Agreement), there remained no real threat of intervention. Nevertheless, the Monroe administration deserves credit for taking a bold stand against a European intervention it believed still threatened in December 1823.

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[1] The Holy Alliance was created in September 1815 by Czar Alexander. The alliance bound Russia, Prussia, and Austria in a "Christian union of charity, peace, and love." The alliance came to include almost every monarch in Europe, with the exception of those of Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire. In August 1823, Britain informed the United States that the Holy Alliance was determined to return the newly-independent south American countries to Spanish domination and to reintroduce a monarchical system of government.

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Although President Monroe's December 2, 1823 message to Congress (the equivalent of a State of the Union address today) discussed many issues, it is best remembered for the foreign policy passages that became the basis for the Monroe Doctrine. As Monroe's Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams played a large role in drafting the foreign policy portions of the President's message.

Early in his message, the President set forth the principle that the American continents, "*by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subject for future colonization by any European power.*" (Colonies still held by Europe, however, would not be disturbed.)

The President also took up the question of the Holy Alliance and its desire to see a monarchical system of government imposed on South America. In addition to declaring that the political system of the Holy Alliance was fundamentally different from that of the United States, the President declared that the United States "*should consider any attempt on their (*the Alliance's*) part to extend their political system to any portion <u>of this hemisphere</u>* (emphasis added) *as dangerous to our peace and safety.*" This was the first time that the United States had demonstrated a strategic interest in territories outside the union.

The Sequence of Events

In August 1823, British Foreign Minister George Canning approached the U.S. Minister (the equivalent of a modern-day Ambassador) to Great Britain, Richard Rush, with news that the Holy Alliance was determined to restore Spanish America to Spain and reestablish a monarchical system of government in the former colonies. Due to the fact that diplomatic correspondence, like all mail at the time, was sent by boat, Rush's report of this conversation, was not received in Washington until early October.

In his letter to Adams, Rush reported that Canning had proposed that the United States and Britain jointly and publicly announce that *they considered the recovery of the colonies to be hopeless, that neither country aimed to take possesston of any of the colonies, and that they would not view transfer of any colony to a new power with indifference.*[2] Canning also told Rush of the Holy Alliance's plans to hold a conference soon to decide the fate of Spanish America.

It is important to note that the United States had already recognized the newly-independent states at this point, while Great Britain had not. In addition, Canning's overture to Rush was especially significant in that it represented the first time since independence that the former enemy had approached the United States Government with an offer to work together toward a common goal. Although ostensibly precipitated by the imminent success of the French in Spain and Britain's concern that French victory would result in restoration of the New World to Spain, Britain's motives, however, were not completely unselfish. Because of its considerable commercial interests in South America, Great Britain did not want to see Spanish control restored.

Upon receipt of Rush's initial report of the conversation with Canning, President Monroe wrote to two former presidents, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, to seek their advice. In his letter to the former Presidents, Monroe asks: *"If a case can exist in which a sound maxim*[3] *may, and ought to be departed from, is not the present instance precisely that case?"* In their responses[4], both former Presidents approved of joint action. Secretary of State Adams, however, was suspicious of Canning's motives and preferred to act alone. He felt that without assurance of British recognition of Spanish American independence, there was no rationale for joint action.

At about the same time Rush's report of the British overtures was received in Washington, Russian Minister to the United States Baron de Tuyl sent a note to Adams advising the United States of his government's decision not to receive representatives from any of the just-formed states in the New World and expressing Russia's satisfaction with America's declared neutrality in the war between the colonies and Spain.

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[2] See Document 2 for excerpts from the correspondence between George Canning and Richard Rush

[3] The "sound maxim" which Monroe refers to is, of course, Washington's admonishment to avoid permanent alliances

[4] See Document 4 for the text of Thomas Jefferson's reply to Monroe's letter

What's more, the United States and Russia were involved in a territorial/commercial dispute in the northwest of the North American continent. Although the official U.S. position was to possibly recognize Russian claims north of the fifty-fifth parallel, Secretary of State Adams reportedly told Baron de Tuyl in July 1823 that the United States would contest any Russian claim to territory on the North American continent and that the American continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments.

Fortunately, this position had also been made known to Minister Rush in London for use in discussions with the British, thus providing Rush with enough guidance to be able to give Canning an initial reaction to the suggestion of joint action a month later.

How the American Government reacted to the Russian and British interest in the American continents shaped the foreign policy segments of President Monroe's December 2, 1823 message to the Congress.

The exact wording of the December 2 message to the Congress was debated at several cabinet meetings, with some of the text being taken either from drafts of instructions to be sent to Richard Rush regarding how to respond to British Foreign Minister Canning or drafts of responses to Russian Minister Baron de Tuyl.

In his memoirs, which were based on a diary he kept at the time, Secretary of State Adams captured the essence of the debate that took place at these cabinet meetings. As Secretary of State, Adams was responsible for U.S. foreign policy. As such, his depiction of the cabinet meetings focuses on the foreign policy debates that occurred.

Important actors at the time included President Monroe, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, Secretary of Navy Southard, U.S. Attorney General William Wirt, Secretary of the Treasury William Crawford, U.S. Minister to Great Britain Richard Rush, British Foreign Minister George Canning, and Russian Minister to the United States Baron de Tuyl.

Contrary to the current situation, diplomacy in the early 19th century was carried out by a handful of people. Less than two dozen individuals were employed at the State Department and the United States had ministers plenipotentiary in only a few countries. Richard Rush, our Minister in Britain, worked alone, as compared to today when our Embassy in London is staffed by over a thousand Americans.

What's more, instructions and reporting cables were hand written by the minister or the Secretary himself and sent by boat, often taking weeks to reach their destination.

Although the numbers have changed dramatically, the essence of diplomatic work has not. Then, as now, it is the role of the foreign service officer or Ambassador to "be the eyes and ears" of the United States abroad and to represent U.S. foreign policy to a foreign government.

Richard Rush did exactly this when approached by the British Foreign Secretary in August 1823. After the first conversation with Canning, he wrote to the Secretary of State to seek guidance on how to respond. Before he could receive instructions, he received a written note from Canning following up on their earlier discussion. Rush responded to this note based on earlier guidance and sent copies of both pieces of correspondence to Adams. And thus continued the process until final instructions were sent out in late November (arriving well after the President's December 2 message to the Congress had been made public).

The key thing to realize here is that foreign policy is made by people and not something that simply happens. It invariably has a direct impact on the daily lives of all Americans and is something that should concern all citizens.

Document List

1. Excerpts from President Monroe's December 2, 1823 message to the Congress that became known as the Monroe Doctrine.
2. Excerpts from correspondence between U.S. Minister to Great Britain Richard Rush and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams.
3. Excerpts from John Quincy Adams' Memoirs covering cabinet meetings at which December 2, 1823 message was discussed.
4. Text of letter from Thomas Jefferson to President Monroe laying out the former's views on how to respond to the British suggestion of a joint declaration.
5. Editorial from a contemporary paper summarizing how the President's message had been received in America.

The U.S. Foreign Service:

- The number of Diplomatic and Consular Posts has grown from 4 and 3 respectively in 1781 to 7 and 83 respectively in 1820 and 162 and 75 respectively in 1997.
- There have been 64 Secretaries of State since Thomas Jefferson was appointed to the position on September 26, 1789.
- Benjamin Franklin was the first U.S. diplomat. He was appointed in 1776 as part of a commission charged with gaining French support for American independence. Later, he was appointed Minister to France in 1778.
- The rank of Ambassador was first used in 1893; prior to that the highest-ranking U.S. diplomats were Ministers.
- Students wishing to learn more about the State Department and the U.S. Foreign Service are encouraged to visit the State Department's web site at www.state.gov

THE MONROE DOCTRINE
A Civics Unit
Using Primary Source Documents

Overview:

In 1823, less than fifty years after the United States gained its independence, President Monroe set out a new foreign policy that became known as the Monroe Doctrine. The document expressed the belief that the United States had a special interest in the Western Hemisphere. It also expressed support for the newly independent nations of Latin America and espousing the principles of individual freedom and democracy. The doctrine was the first major change in foreign policy since George Washington warned against alliances and it has remained a pillar of US foreign policy, influencing US foreign policy towards Latin America until this day. This assessment uses the Monroe Doctrine to explore how US foreign policy is created within a historical context and the long term implications of foreign policy. In preparing for the assessment students will use a number of primary source documents regarding the events leading up to and the creation of the Monroe Doctrine. Preparing for the assessment will also enable students to investigate the Constitutional design of foreign policy duties within the federal government and how this design affects our interaction with other states.

Inquiry Question:

What factors contributed to the issuing of the Monroe Doctrine and how has it affected US foreign policy in the 19th and 20th centuries?

Grade Level: 10th - 12th grade

Time Allotment: The assessment requires 3 hours to complete. It is recommended that students receive approximately 12 hours of instruction to meet the civics standards upon which the assessment is based.

Standards being assessed: This assessment checks student proficiency in the following standards for civic and government:

Interaction among nation-states

Students should be able to explain how nation-states interact with each other.
Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about how United States foreign policy is made and the means by which it is carried out.

The historical context of United States foreign policy

Students should be able to explain the principal foreign policy positions of the United States and evaluate their consequences.

The American federal system

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the distribution of powers and responsibilities with the federal system.

Students will be prepared to take this assessment and meet the standards when they are able to do the following:

- Describe the methods that states used to interact with each other during the time leading up to the issuance of the Monroe Doctrine.
- Describe how such methods may have influenced the diplomacy of the early 19th century.
- Analyze the role that the threat of military force played in the both the creation of and the content of the doctrine.
- Explain the significance of the Monroe Doctrine as a principle policy in United States relations with the world.
- Evaluate the Monroe Doctrine as a symbol of a change in the US policy position from isolationist to internationalist or a world power.
- Explain the powers the Constitution gives to the president and Congress in foreign affairs and how these powers have been used in relation to the Monroe Doctrine.
- Explain the tension between constitutional provisions of checks and balances and the requirements of foreign policy.
- Describe the process by which the policy of the Monroe Doctrine was created.
- Analyze the role of the Monroe Doctrine in the United States' involvement in Latin America.

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ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

This assessment provides a vehicle for students to demonstrate understanding of the civics standards with regard to the creation and content of the Monroe Doctrine, and its influence on US foreign policy in the 19th and 20th century. The first part of the assessment assignment requires students to apply their knowledge of the different opinions expressed by individuals during the creation of this policy. The second part of the assessment requires students to evaluate the importance of the doctrine and discuss whether the US should have taken such a policy stance. Preparation for the assessment should include a review of the events which created the historical context of the Monroe Doctrine, such as the independence of the colonies in Latin America and the political situation in Europe.

Distribute the assessment assignment sheet the class period prior to the assessment day. Allow students a few minutes to read this paper. Draw their attention to the list of roles they may choose from and the topics each must address in their policy recommendation in part 1 of the assessment. Emphasize that they must write a paper from a point of view of one of the characters listed. Read through the directions for part 2 of the assessment with them. Explain how a fishbowl discussion works. If they are confused or unfamiliar with this technique, you may want to have a short, five minute practice fishbowl discussion on a timely unrelated topic to demonstrate the process.

Allow students 75 minutes to complete part 1 of the assessment. Part 2 of the assessment will take one hour divided into two 30 minute discussions. You may want to provide them with a copy of the scoring rubric and fishbowl observation sheet if you have not already done so. The rubric will help to keep the students' responses focused. Students should have access to the primary documents and preparation notes during the assessment.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Part I of the Assessment:

Many people were involved with, and had an interest in, the policy created in the Monroe Doctrine. Choose one of the historical characters listed below, and from that character's point of view write a policy recommendation on whether you think the Doctrine should be issued or not. Remember you can only use the information which really would have been available to the individuals at the time. Do not include history after 1823, or the opinion that hindsight has provided.

Characters to choose from:

- Secretary of State John Adams
- British Foreign Minister George Canning
- US Minister to Great Britain Richard Rush
- Thomas Jefferson
- Leader of a Latin American Country in 1823 (Choose a specific country)
- Simon Bolivar

At a minimum your policy recommendation must address the following:

- the implications the policy of the Monroe Doctrine may have on the relations between the United States and the states of Europe.
- the responsibilities this doctrine could create for the United States.
- the Constitutionality of such a doctrine in relation to the balance of powers between the executive and the legislative branch.
- the reasons you support or oppose the doctrine based on the principles on which the US government was founded, such as individual freedom, liberty, democracy, and natural rights.

Part II of the Assessment:
Each student will participate in a class fishbowl discussion. The subject of the discussion will be based on the following question:

- Considering the historical events since 1823 and the US involvement and foreign policy towards Latin America, was the Monroe Doctrine a good or bad policy for the United States to adopt?

This is a discussion based on opinion and the merit of the Doctrine - it is not a question of Constitutionality as it is in the debate in activity 3. For a fishbowl discussion the class will be divided in half. While one half of the class discusses the question above, the other half will evaluate the participation of one specific member from the discussion half by using the fishbowl observation sheet. Students will be graded on the use of specifics to support their arguments and their understanding of US foreign policy in regards to Latin America. Students are also graded on expressing a clear opinion of the merits of the policy of the Monroe Doctrine. The discussion will last 30 minutes. Then the situation will be reversed. The other half will then discuss the same question and each student will evaluate the student who had observed him or her. Students participation in the discussion will be also evaluated by the teacher. The grade for this part of the assessment will be based on participation and the evaluation that is **given** to the other student. Student evaluation can be used as feedback, but will not determine a student's grade. Teacher assessment based on the assessment rubric will determine a student's grade.

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Criteria weight	Pre-Basic (1 point)	Basic (2 points)	Proficient (3 points)	Advanced (4 points)
Understands the many factors which shaped and influenced the issuance of the Monroe Doctrine x 3	Student explains some of the basic world political conditions which prompted the doctrine. Student has weak or rudimentary understanding of the factors which shaped the Monroe Doctrine as described in the primary source documents.	Student explains the world political conditions which prompted the doctrine and describes some ways that these influenced the Monroe Doctrine policy, but the response provides little content , and does not address the complex diplomacy behind it.	Student explains the world political conditions which prompted the doctrine and describes how they interacted with and influenced diplomacy to create the Monroe Doctrine policy. Response demonstrates understanding of the many factors which shaped policy and its effects.	Student explains the world political conditions and diplomacy which prompted the doctrine, describing factors such as methods of diplomacy and role of military threats. Response demonstrates a complex understanding and gives examples of the many factors which shaped policy and its possible effects.
Describes the Monroe Doctrine as a principal policy in US foreign policy x 2	Student is able to identify the Monroe Doctrine as a principal policy of the United States but fails to describe its influence on major policy positions or the responsibilities it could entail.	Student is able to identify the Monroe Doctrine as a principal policy of the United States and discusses the major policy shift it represents. However, student demonstrates only basic knowledge of the responsibilities it could create for the United States.	Student explains the Monroe Doctrine as a shift of the principal policy of the United States. Student explains the basic nature of the policy before and after the shift and discusses how this new policy affects the US role and responsibility in Latin America.	Student explains the M.D as a shift in US principal policy and describes the policy before and after the shift by linking policy to the greater principles upon which the US is founded, such as democracy and freedom. The student discusses the responsibility the doctrine would bring.
Analyzes the Constitutional provisions and separation of power in relation to the Monroe Doctrine x 2	Student mentions the federal separation of powers in relation to foreign affairs, but does not, or only vaguely discusses them in relation to the Monroe Doctrine.	Student describes the federal separation of powers in relation to foreign affairs and its rationale and describes the questions that the M. D raises in regards to maintaining separation of powers, but does not clearly explore or express an opinion on the question.	Student identifies the key questions raised by the Monroe doctrine in relation to separation of powers. Student expresses an opinion of the question of Constitutionality and specifically links them to the framework of the Constitution.	Student identifies the key separation of powers questions raised by the Monroe Doctrine, both in terms of its creation and how these powers have been used. Students cites specifics from the Constitution.
Evaluates the merits and consequences of the Monroe Doctrine x 3	Student is able to mention some aspects of US foreign policy towards Latin America but lacks a clear explanation of their connection to the Monroe Doctrine and shows a weak understanding of the consequences of the policy.	Student discusses several key events of US foreign policy in Latin America, and demonstrates some knowledge of their relation to the Doctrine, but fails to present an argument either for or against its merits.	Student discusses several key events of US foreign policy in Latin America, and demonstrates a complex understanding of their relation to the Doctrine. Student presents an opinion and evaluation of the merits of the policy.	Student demonstrates an advanced understanding of the relationship between the Monroe Doctrine and US foreign policy in the 19th and 20th centuries. By providing specific examples, the student presents a clear opinion of the merits and consequences of the policy.

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Activities

Three unit activities to prepare for this assessment are provided below:

Suggested Activity 1

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand how states interacted with each other in the early nineteenth century and learn about the diplomatic methods and the process by which the Monroe Doctrine was created. Prior to this activity, perhaps in the class before, the teacher should discuss the historical context of the Monroe Doctrine by discussing the independence of the former Spanish colonies in Latin America and the political situation, at the time, in Europe. The teachers should also read and discuss the Monroe Doctrine (Document 1) as an introduction to this unit. It is important for students to have this background in order to understand the other primary source documents.

Group Work and Presentations:

Students will read and summarize the main points of selected correspondence (Document 2) relating to the creation of the Monroe Doctrine. Before beginning group work, as a class, read through the introduction to the correspondence to get a general overview. Form 4 or 5 groups with at least 4 students in each group. Each group will receive 2 or 3 letters to read and then summarize. Provide each group with copies of the letters and instruct them to highlight or underline the main points. Then, on a separate piece of paper, students will briefly list the main points of each letter, which they will then present to the class.

Group #1	Letter 1, 2 and 3
Group #2	Letter 4, 5 and 6
Group #3	Letter 7 and 8
Group #4	Letter 9, 10 and 11
Group #5	Letter 12 and 13

Each group should meet for about 20 minutes. Students should read and highlight each of their letters' main points and then prepare a brief summary to share with the class. Encourage students to choose one or two quotations from their letters to include as part of their brief presentation.

Next, each group will present the main points of the letters that they have read. Be sure to have the groups present numerically from groups 1 to 5 in order to present the correspondence chronologically. As each group presents, students should fill in the Diplomatic Correspondence Chart (Handout 1).

After each group has presented, students should have completely filled in their chart, and then, through a teacher lead discussion, the class should talk about the following questions:

- What were some ways that diplomacy was different in 1823 than it is today?
- Why was Canning, the British Secretary of State, so anxious to get the United States to issue the declaration about the Colonies?
- What does Canning predict might happen to the colonies if the United States and Britain do not take a stand to protect them?
- Why did Canning suddenly change his attitude towards soliciting the US support?
- What does it mean to have an isolationist foreign policy?
- Where are isolationist ideas found in these letters?

Suggested Activity 2

This activity encourages students to explore the significance of the Monroe Doctrine and US foreign policy in relation to the principles of American Constitutional values and the Declaration of Independence. The focus of this activity is document 4, the letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe. President Monroe had written to Jefferson seeking his advice about issuing the statement which became known as the Monroe Doctrine. The letter discusses many of the principles upon which the United States was founded and also presents a summary of the foreign policy challenges that the US will face in the 19th century.

To begin this activity the class should be asked to brainstorm about some of the principles that are the basis for the Constitution and the founding of the United States. Make a list or have a student make a list on the board of these principles, for you will refer back to these later in the activity. This type of activity can provoke interesting discussion, and the teacher should encourage discussion about what terms such as liberty, freedom, and democracy mean.

Letter Writing Activity:

Next, as a class, read through Jefferson's letter. Each student will then have the assignment of writing a letter in response to Mr. Jefferson. The students may write the letter from themselves, or they could invent a person and write the letter from that person's perspective. Encourage students to imitate the writing style shown in the letter, to give them a feel for the language of the day.

Each letter should contain the following:

- The students must pick at least three points, of their choosing, brought up by Mr. Jefferson and respond to these in their letter
- Students should include their opinion on whether the ideas of the Monroe Doctrine are in concurrence with the principles that were listed on the board at the beginning of the activity.
- Students should offer their opinion on whether or not the US should move away from an isolationist foreign policy.

The letter writing could either be assigned as homework or an in class activity. After the letters are written, ask for a few volunteers to read their letters to the class.

Suggested Activity 3

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand the powers the Constitution gives to the President and Congress in foreign affairs and how these powers have been used in relation to the Monroe Doctrine, both in the creation of the policy and through its influence on later policy. This activity should only be conducted after students are familiar with the doctrine itself and the factors which influenced its creation.

Students will work in groups for this activity. Begin by assigning each group a historical event in US - Latin American relations . Each group will be responsible for finding out the basic information surrounding their historical events and describing the United States' role and reaction to the situation. Depending upon time availability, this activity could be expanded by making this a research project in the library, or it can be done in less time by using a history text book or an encyclopedia. Each group will present their findings to the class regarding their event and discuss how the Monroe Doctrine may have played a role in the US policy in the event.

Possible events to assign include the following:

- The Spanish American War
- The Cuban Missile Crisis
- The US involvement in the overthrowing of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala in 1954
- The Bay of Pigs Incident
- The Military Coup and Overthrow of the Allende Government in Chile in 1973
- The Invasion of Grenada in 1982.

Many more could be added to this list, depending upon class size.

Debate: The second part of this activity is a debate. Students will use their knowledge of the Monroe Doctrine, US Foreign Policy towards Latin America, and the Constitution to debate the following resolution:

The Monroe Doctrine and past executive actions resulting from the doctrine were unconstitutional.

Give students the debate resolution prior to the day of the debate. Tell students that they must come to class prepared to debate both the Pro and Con sides of the resolution. Students should prepare for the debate by completing the Debate Preparation Sheet (Handout 2). Tell students that they must prepare three arguments supporting each side of the resolution.

On the day of the debate, split the class into two groups. Depending on class size, you could have two debates and split the class into four groups. Each group is assigned either Pro or Con.

The Debate should be organized as follows:

Introduction: Each group should begin by presenting their arguments and summarizing their main points.

Rebuttal: The debate is opened up as either sides may ask questions of the other team and provide responses.

Conclusion: Each group restates their argument and their strongest points.

Encourage students to write down their questions for the other side during the introductions of the arguments. After ten to fifteen minutes of the debate have each group adopt the opposite side they had been arguing and repeat the process.

Summary of Documents

Document 1, Excerpts from President Monroe's December 2, 1823; Message to Congress: In the larger historical context of European political maneuvering, both on the continent and in overseas colonies, President James Monroe states that affairs in the Western Hemisphere are of vital interest to the United States. His speech to Congress addressed four key points: the "American continents...are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers"; secondly, "the political system of [the European colonial powers] is essentially different ... from that of America" and, Monroe implies incompatible with the new democratic Western Hemisphere nations; thirdly, the United States would " consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any [free] portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety"; finally, although the United States supports all territories and states' attempts to become free and independent, Monroe promises not to interfere with any existing European colonies.

Document 2, Selected correspondence between Richard Rush and George Canning and between Richard Rush and Secretary of State Adams (August - October 1823): This selection represents a series of correspondence between the US representative in Great Britain and the British Secretary of State and the US Secretary of State. This correspondence illustrates the many factors which were considered before issuing the Monroe Doctrine and the influence that the British suggestions had on the shape of the document which became known as the Monroe Doctrine. The letters also highlight the many international political considerations which influenced the decision to issue the Doctrine.

Document 3, Excerpts from the Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Adams memoirs detail about a week's discussion among Monroe's advisors preceding the actual issuance of the Monroe Doctrine. Adams paints himself as a voice of moderation and pragmatism in these accounts. He states at the beginning his belief that the United States would best be served by remaining outside of European politics. Recognizing the European Alliance possessed a military might to which the young United States could not compare, Adams wonders whether the US has not "been over hasty in acknowledging the South American independence". He explores various scenarios possibly resulting from a statement by the United States and advises a cautious, inoffensive declaration from Monroe.

Document 4, Letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Dated October 24, 1823: Monroe wrote to Jefferson earlier in the Fall asking his advice on the matter of recent European attempts to reestablish colonies in the Americas. Jefferson's reply neatly summarizes the new republic's stature and importance in early nineteenth century international relations. He discusses George Washington's famous warning to the entangling alliances of Europe and observes the recent return in European politics to "despotism". Jefferson also muses on the advisability of acquiring some of the former Spanish colonies, most notably Cuba. This last point would be a fascinating one to inject into any discussion of the Spanish-American War that happened eighty years later.

Document 5, Editorial from the *Salem Gazette*, December 12 1823: The editorial expresses a cynical view of the popular acceptance of Monroe's Doctrine. The writer of this editorial feels that the doctrine has received too much praise in the press and he does not seem to have a very high opinion of President Monroe. It is interesting to see the style of political commentary from 1823 and compare how different or similar it is to today.

Diplomatic Correspondence Chart

Letters	Main Points
Letter 1 Rush to Adams (8/19) Letter 2 Canning to Rush (8/20) Letter 3 Rush's response to Canning (8/23)	
Letter 4 Rush's cable to Adams (8/23) Letter 5 Canning to Rush (8/23) Letter 6 Rush's response to Canning (8/27)	
Letter 7 Rush to Adams (8/28) Letter 8 Canning to Rush (8/31)	
Letter 9 Rush to Adams (9/8) Letter 10 Rush to Adams (9/19) Letter 11 Rush to Adams (10/10)	
Letter 12 Instructions to Rush (11/29) Letter 13 Instructions to Rush (11/30)	

Debate Preparation Sheet - Outline your arguments below

Resolution - The Monroe Doctrine and past executive actions resulting from the doctrine were unconstitutional.

Pro

-
-
-

Con

-
-
-

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Fishbowl Observation Sheet

"Fish" _____
Observer _____
Focus Question - Considering the historical events since 1823 and the US involvement and foreign policy towards Latin America, was the Monroe Doctrine a good or bad policy for the United States to adopt?

Behavior	# of Times Observed	Comments
States idea, supports with evidence		
Agrees with speaker, adding evidence		
Respectfully disagrees, offering evidence		
Asks a question		
Encourages others to contribute		
Summarizes		
Other		

- **Foreign Policy Magazine.** Students are asked to create a magazine which provides an overview of the Monroe Doctrine and the US - Latin America relations. The magazine should include articles about the creation of the doctrine and subsequent events in Latin American History in which the US played a role. Students would be required to contribute factual, "Hard News" stories, as well as editorials in which they could express their opinions regarding both the merit and Constitutionality of the executive actions based on the Monroe Doctrine. As a fun part of the project have students design related advertisements or illustrations for extra credit.

- **Panel Discussion.** Students are given a historical scenario of a foreign policy situation, having to do with US -Latin American relations. Students will be a assigned a role of a historical figure who had involvement with or ideas about US -Latin American relations, such as James Monroe, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, John Kennedy, Harry Truman. (The list is endless.) The students will accurately portray the views of their assigned historical figures in a panel discussion. The purpose of the discussion is to recommend policy action for the situation, and each student will represent the different view of his or her character. This assessment can be used with studying US-Latin American relations or when studying 19th and 20th century United States' foreign policies.

- **Talk Show.** This is a group assessment, and it is similar to the panel discussion, except that the presentation is scripted. Each group chooses a event or situation related to the Monroe Doctrine and US - Latin American relations to discuss on their talk show. The talk show, in the style of the *McClaughlin Group* or *Crossfire* would have "experts" discuss the situation from the view point of their assigned characters. Students will discuss the issues, present foreign policy decisions, and demonstrate their knowledge on the many influencing factors on the interaction of the United States with other nations.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY
A History Unit
Using Primary Source Documents

Overview:

The Monroe Doctrine is usually mentioned by teachers in United States history classes during the "Era of Good Feelings" unit that usually comes between the study of the War of 1812 and the Jacksonian Era. The Doctrine is an excellent example of the republican idealism that still characterized American politics 50 years after the Revolution. But since it had little real effect on the country's relations with foreign countries, and since history teachers at this point in the year already are gearing up to study the causes of the Civil War, students often forget the Doctrine as quickly as they learned it. However, the Monroe Doctrine is a critical piece of the history of the American republic and of its diplomacy, and deserves a fuller place in secondary history classes. It also offers an excellent lens through which to examine American foreign policy of the twentieth century.

Studied in its proper "chronological" place in United States history, the Monroe Doctrine loses much of its power and meaning. After all, the United States in 1823 was in little or no position to enforce the tenets of the Doctrine. Only later, in the 1890s and early 1900s, did the United States develop an activist foreign policy. Since Presidents McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson had few actual precedents on which to draw, American foreign policy was an almost entirely new creation. Their actions at once tried to apply the anti-European philosophy of the Monroe Doctrine, while simultaneously trying to gain economic and political advantages for the United States in the Western Hemisphere. Certainly, the United States violated the anti-imperialist "spirit" of the Monroe Doctrine during this period. Using the Monroe Doctrine in a study of this era helps students understand how the powerful ideas upon which this country was created are always being used and modified by later Americans.

This unit uses the Doctrine itself to prompt a critical evaluation of American foreign policy around the turn of the twentieth century, when the United States first became active in foreign affairs. It begins with a detailed look at the language and philosophy of the document itself, then progresses through a look at turn-of-the-century American foreign policy, and culminates with an assessment that directs students to reflect on these events in a letter to President Monroe updating him on the uses and abuses of his Doctrine.

Inquiry Question:

How did the Monroe Doctrine guide American foreign policy in the early twentieth century?

Grade Level: 10th-12th grade

Time Allotment: The entire unit requires a week's classroom time. Certainly two block periods, or four regular 50-minute periods, are necessary to cover the suggested activities. This includes two periods for an introduction and a detailed look at the Monroe Doctrine itself, and two periods for an inquiry jigsaw activity and a culminating discussion. The assessment then could be assigned during fifth class period, or given as homework over a weekend or a few evenings.

Standards being assessed: This assessment checks student proficiency in the following standards for History.

The impact of the American Revolution

Students should be able to explain the impact of the American Revolution on American politics, economy and society.

Territorial Expansion

Students should be able to explain the United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers.

United States foreign policy

Students should be able to explain the United States foreign policy after the American Civil war.

The changing role of the United States

Students should be able to explain and describe how the role of the United States in world affairs changed during and after World War One.

Students will be prepared to take the assessment and meet the standards when they are able to do the following:

- describe how the Monroe Doctrine was an articulation of the republican principles upon which the United States was founded
- interpret the specific language and vocabulary of the Monroe Doctrine
- define the following words: imperialism, isolationism, expansion
- explain what historical events prompted the issuance of the Monroe Doctrine
- describe the agreement that developed between the United States and Great Britain regarding Western Hemisphere colonies in the 1820s
- understand why the Monroe Doctrine had little immediate practical effect on world affairs
- summarize the factors that led the United States to become active in world affairs in the 1890s
- connect American foreign policy in the 1890s and early 1900s to the earlier period of territorial expansion on the North American continent
- analyze the reasons for U.S. involvement in seven foreign policy events in the 1890s and early 1900s
- distinguish the role that economics played in U.S. foreign policy during this period
- evaluate whether the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine was upheld or violated by American foreign policy during the early twentieth century

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Assessment Instructions to Teachers

This assessment calls students to initiate a dialogue with James Monroe. Throughout the unit, students will have studied the historical context on the Monroe Doctrine, the language and philosophy of the Monroe Doctrine, and the application of the Monroe Doctrine in the 1890s and early 1900s. This assessment will directs students to reflect on the application of the Monroe Doctrine around the turn of the twentieth century. They are to write a letter to President Monroe, informing him of the use of his Doctrine 80 years after it was issued.

1. Make sure the students each have a copy of the "United States as an Emerging World Power" chart that the class constructed together.

2. Ask the class if there are any questions on the discussion with which the class concluded its study of the chart.

3. Distribute a copy of the text of the Monroe Doctrine to each student, if they do not have one already.

4. Hand out a copy of the page that follows, "Instructions to Students." Read the paragraphs with the students, and take time to explain each of the five requirements. Explain that their responses to these exact points will determine their grades.

5. Distribute the grading rubric to students with the assignment. Indicate that their grades will depend solely on their answers to these five requirements. Help them understand that the criteria accumulate horizontally across the chart. For example, a "proficient" score on one benchmark will necessarily also have satisfied the requirements for the "pre-basic" and "basic" criteria on that same benchmark.

6. Assign the letter to be due after two nights' or a weekend's worth of work time.

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Assessment Instructions to Students

You have studied the language and philosophy of the Monroe Doctrine, and understand the historical context within which it was written. Then, you investigated a number of events in the history of American foreign policy around the turn of the twentieth century. Now, you are going to write a two-page letter back to President Monroe, informing him of the use of his Doctrine 80 years after it was issued This letter must include:

1. Your understanding of the meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, and of the historical period within which it was written.
2. A description of how American power in world affairs had changed from 1823 to the early 1900s.
3. An explanation of how economic considerations entered into American foreign policy decisions in the early 1900s.
4. An analysis of one important event from American foreign policy in the late 1890s or early 1900s.
5. An evaluation of whether Monroe's intentions, as understood by someone from the twentieth century, were upheld or violated by the American policies and actions you detail.

Feel free to make this letter personal, and to point out any confusing or ambiguous parts of the original Monroe Doctrine. For your part, make sure to be explicit and clear about how America's role in world affairs has changed. Above all, concentrate on whether the spirit of the Doctrine was maintained or violated in these later years. Please examine the grading rubric to make sure you have fully understood and completed the assignment.

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Rubric for Monroe Doctrine Assessment

Criteria weight	Pre-Basic (1 point)	Basic (2 point)	Proficient (3 point)	Advanced (4 point)
Understands of the meaning of the Monroe Doctrine, and of the historical period within which it was written *x 2*	Describes the Monroe Doctrine as opposed to colonization. Understands that it was written after the American Revolution.	Understands that the Monroe Doctrine was aimed at European colonization of Latin America. Mentions cooperation between the United States and Great Britain on the matter.	Describes the context of contemporary European history (Holy Alliance, Great Britain's place) , that caused the issuance of the Doctrine. Explains why the Doctrine had little practical effect when it was issued.	Details the four main points of the Monroe Doctrine. Explains the consistency between the language of the document and the republican principles upon which the United States was founded.
Describes how American power in world affairs had changed from 1823 to the early 1900s *x 2*	Understands that the power and authority of the United States grew considerably between the issuance of the Monroe Doctrine and American entry into world affairs in the 1890s.	Explains that the United States believed it was an equal to European powers in the realm of foreign affairs by the 1890s.	Describes how the process of developing an aggressive foreign policy was an extension the territorial expansion practiced on the North American continent during much of the 1800s.	Uses examples from the language of the Monroe Doctrine and from 1900s diplomacy to show how U.S. leaders became much less timid and much more aggressive.
Analyzes one important event from American foreign policy in the late 1890s or early 1900s *x 2*	Describes one foreign policy event from the chart that the class assembled together.	Describes the motives for American involvement in the one foreign policy event described.	Assesses the effect that the Monroe Doctrine had on American actions during the event discussed. Makes a value judgment on the appropriateness of U.S. actions.	Argues in detail for the proper use or misuse of the Monroe Doctrine in the particular event discussed. Explains any extenuating circumstances.
Explains how economic considerations entered into American foreign policy decisions in the early 1900s *x 2*	Mentions that much U.S. foreign policy during the turn of the twentieth century was motivated by economic considerations.	Defines imperialism. Summarizes the economic motivations that directed U.S. behavior in the particular event discussed.	Analyzes how the post-Civil-War economic boom in the United States caused the country to begin looking overseas for raw materials and markets. Discusses American politicians' responses to these pressures.	Analyzes how the ideals of the Monroe Doctrine--that so distinguished the U.S. from Europe--no longer kept the U.S. from behaving any differently from the imperial European countries.
Evaluates whether Monroe's intentions, were upheld or violated by the American policies and actions detailed *x 3*	Includes an evaluation for Monroe regarding the acceptance or rejection of the Doctrine in the 1890s and early 1900s.	Applies the ideals of the Doctrine to the foreign policy event discussed. Determines its use during this event.	Includes a criticism of the foreign policy event discussed, in light of the specific language and spirit of the Monroe Doctrine.	Evaluates whether Monroe's intentions were upheld or violated by the American policies and actions detailed. Appraises why the Doctrine was so used (or misused) and how it could have been more effective.

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Activities

Suggested Activity 1

Introductory Discussion: The purpose of the first activity is to provide some historical context to the students' look at the effect the Monroe Doctrine has had on U.S. foreign policy in the last 180 years. The concept of the Monroe Doctrine may be best taught as a device with which to examine specific events in U.S. diplomatic history. Therefore, the instructor must provide some theoretical, terminological, and historical background to the Doctrine and its uses during the last two centuries. This could be covered in a mini-lecture or discussion format, addressing the following terms and concepts: (Perhaps leave the terms on the board during the unit as a reference.) This activity need not take more than 20 minutes. A more interactive (but more time-consuming way) to cover the material would be to have the students do some preliminary reading on these terms in their textbook, and then to discuss their findings.

1. **imperialism** The instructor should define imperialism as the process of acquiring overseas colonies with the goal of acquiring new sources of raw materials, extending a nation's trading markets, and of increasing the nation's "prestige," or standing among other imperial nations. The instructor should emphasize that the process has been practiced by European nations since the 1400s, and was embraced by the United States around the year 1900. Indeed, U.S. imperialism can even be seen as an extension of the country's policy of territorial expansion in the North American continent during the nineteenth century. Instructors should be careful to distinguish this from the phrase, "an activist foreign policy," which means being active and engaged with foreign countries. The United States explored both courses (often at the same time) during the 1890s and early 1900s. Today, the word, "imperialist," is often used as a pejorative term to specifically apply to an economic relationship of domination and forced submission between a western nation and a third-world country. Modern "anti-imperialists" unhesitatingly blame these relationships for the persistent poverty and extreme political instability in the third world. While certainly all these nuances were not yet apparent to turn-of-the-century imperialists, the instructor should explain that this philosophy is currently being used to examine turn-of-th-century American foreign policy, the period they are just about to study.

2. **isolationism** Explain that isolationists typically resist imperialist foreign policy. Literally, isolationism advocates avoiding economic, political, and diplomatic involvement with foreign countries. It is a concept that was first officially enunciated in American history by President George Washington in his "Farewell Address" of 1796, when he famously urged the country to "... steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." In a way presaging the Monroe Doctrine, Washington explained that Europe "has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns." Ever since then, opponents to activist American foreign policy have usually expressed isolationist sentiments, and claimed that our national interests are quite different from European countries'.

3. **expansionism** Explain that imperialism often, but not always, implies territorial expansion. In both United States and World history, expansion usually has assumed racial overtones, with proponents explaining that a certain "way of life" must be foisted upon the "unconverted" for their own good. European and American imperialists have used this reasoning to justify their colonial ventures. Peoples that have experienced this process typically have lost traditional ways of life, been forced into European economic processes like mercantilism, and often have had their cultures and sometimes even their very lives totally destroyed.

4. **Monroe Doctrine** Define the Doctrine as a speech given by U.S. President James Monroe in 1823 as a statement against European imperialism in the Western Hemisphere. Emphasize that Monroe made a definitive and specific statement in support of the freedom of the newly-independent Latin American nations. Ask students why it was very logical that the United States would take a position like the Monroe Doctrine. (Answer: the U.S. was just 50 years removed from its own colonial experience and subsequent war for independence.) Explain that the Doctrine has been used throughout American diplomatic history since its declaration, and that this unit will evaluate how both the intentions and the actual language of the document have been employed since 1823. Tell the students that part of the unit just begun will be an in-depth look at the language of the document itself, as soon as they are familiarized with some background vocabulary.

Suggested Activity 2

Vocabulary Exercise: Often, secondary students of history avoid examining primary source documents because the vocabulary of these documents can be quite obscure. Usage has changed in the last 180 years; the diplomatic world is far removed from popular culture of the 1990s; and, historical figures (and historians) often inflate their language for a variety of reasons, ranging from a genuine need to convey complicated concepts and positions to an occasional exaggerated sense of self-importance. The purpose of this introductory activity is to expose students to some of the language of early-nineteenth-century diplomacy. They cannot understand all the meanings of the Doctrine without a good grasp of its high-level vocabulary. Assign it as an individual activity, or go over with the class, discussing the meanings (and mistaken meanings) of some of the words in the document. Since the vocabulary presented is quite challenging, provide dictionaries in the classroom to allow students to look up unfamiliar words, and spend plenty of time (30 minutes?) going over the results as a class. See Handout 1, "The Language of the Monroe Doctrine."

Suggested Activity 3

Guided Reading of the Monroe Doctrine: After explaining some basic terms to students and exposing them to some of the difficult vocabulary of diplomacy, students are ready to examine the language of the Monroe Doctrine itself. The purpose of this activity is to expose students to the philosophy, logic, and historical importance of the Doctrine. Also, it will prepare students to use the document itself to evaluate American foreign policy in the twentieth century, an activity to follow later in the unit. Distribute copies of the Monroe Doctrine text, and copies of Handout

2: "The Monroe Doctrine: A Guided Reading." Depending on time available, give students a chance to complete the exercise on their own, or go through the document with the entire class using the questions on the handout as a guide.

Suggested Activity 4

Jigsaw Overview of U.S. Foreign Policy, c. 1900: Since the Monroe Doctrine may be best taught as a tool with which to examine events in the history of American foreign policy, Activity 4 directs students on a survey of important events well after the issuance of the Doctrine in 1823. The purpose of Activity 4 is to examine the application of the Monroe Doctrine during the first two decades of active American foreign policy, the 1890s and the early 1900s. The Doctrine is fundamentally an anti-imperialist document, so American interventions into the affairs of third-world countries in the twentieth century raise the immediate question of consistency. Isolationist critics quickly accuse the United States of hypocrisy when this disparity is evaluated. They claim that the United States always uses high ideals (such as expressed in the Monroe Doctrine) to justify interventions in the affairs of third-world countries that are fundamentally motivated by economic considerations.

Use the following jigsaw activity during the unit usually taught as "The United States as an Emerging World Power," which covers America's first forays into global foreign policy around the year 1900. The activity is a helpful introduction to a study of the Spanish-American War, and will prompt students to test how the ideals of the Monroe Doctrine have been actually used in American foreign policy in the early twentieth century.

1. Distribute or display Handout 3, a chart that breaks down seven important events in U.S. foreign policy around the turn of the twentieth century.

2. Split up the class into seven groups, and direct each group to investigate one of the events in their textbook.

3. Explain that they are responsible for learning about the event, relaying to the class the necessary information to complete each column in the chart, and answering the specific questions particular to their event (found listed after the chart). Emphasize that a group that answers all the questions relevant to their event will have no trouble filling in the required information on the chart for the entire class.

4. Give the students time to investigate, discuss, and prepare their information (perhaps 30 minutes).

5. Then, gather the class back together, and go through each event, giving the groups a chance to explain their findings. Make sure the economic motives for American involvement are clear in each event (thus, the last query in the chart: "Example of U.S. imperialism?"). Probably, students will answer, "Yes," for each of the events. The instructor should encourage students to question whether imperialism as practiced in these events was primarily an economic or a political phenomenon.

6. After the class has filled out the chart together, culminate the exercise by initiating a discussion on the following essential questions:

Why was the United States able to become active in foreign affairs in the 1890s, when had not been able to in the 1820s? (It had a bigger military, especially a bigger navy, thanks to Alfred Thayer Mahan and Teddy Roosevelt.)

How can U.S. foreign policy in the 1890s and early 1900s be considered an extension of Manifest Destiny?

What domestic considerations urged the United States to begin an activist foreign policy in the 1890s? (Expansion of American business, need for overseas markets. Note how economic power is often translated into military power.)

Did U.S. foreign policy around 1900 uphold the ideals of the Monroe Doctrine?

How was the Monroe Doctrine used to justify U.S. foreign actions around 1900?

The Monroe Doctrine held out the promise of a "democratic" foreign policy. Is there any such thing? Was it practiced by the United States in the early 1900s?

Historian Robert Schulzinger, in writing on the strident self-righteousness that characterized American foreign policy around the turn of the twentieth century (in American Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century, Oxford University Press, 1994), observed:

> *"This conviction gave a missionary flavor to American diplomacy, irritated Europeans, and bewildered people in the rest of the world."*

Is this an accurate characterization of American foreign policy during this era?

The Language of the Monroe Doctrine

Directions: Choose the best use of the following words, each of which is found in the text of the Monroe Doctrine (1823) and its associated documents. Try figuring out the meanings of the words from their context in the Doctrine itself; certainly, look up any words that are still unfamiliar in a dictionary.

1. **accede**
   a. Great Britain opposed further Spanish colonization of the Western Hemisphere, and **acceded** to the American declaration that supported the independence of Spain's newly-free colonies.
   b. The "Holy Alliance," a group of European monarchies, **acceded** power over their former Western Hemisphere colonies to the United States.

2. **manifest**
   a. When both the United States and Great Britain declared opposition to continued European colonization of the Americas, our common beliefs were made **manifest**.
   b. By adding his own "corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, Theodore Roosevelt **manifested** President Monroe's true intentions.

3. **solicitude**
   a. The colonists welcomed the **solicitude** that greeted them after Spanish troops arrived to quell the latest rebellion and silence the guerillas' daily attacks.
   b. Spanish intentions to repossess their former colonies in the Americas raised the **solicitude** of President Monroe.

4. **felicity**
   a. After fighting for and eventually gaining their independence from the domineering British, the Americans found themselves in a state of unprecedented **felicity**.
   b. The United States, valuing its hard-won independence from Great Britain and admiring the efforts of Latin Americans to overthrow their oppressive colonial powers, greeted Spanish hints at impending counter-revolutions with **felicity**.

5. **amicable**
   a. Spain felt **amicable** about the successful independence movements in their former Latin American colonies.
   b. By 1823, relations between the United States and Great Britain had resumed an **amicable** tone.

6. **disposition**
   a. The **disposition** of the dialogue between the United States and Great Britain regarding Latin American colonies was entirely cordial.
   b. Spain's **disposition** of its Latin American colonies was not by choice: local independence movements began violent revolutions.

7. **interposition**
   a. The expression of American and British consensus on the new Latin American republics represented a decisive **interposition** of common goals and beliefs.
   b. When Spain considered an attempt at repossessing its former Latin American colonies, the United States and Great Britain **interposed** with their anti-imperialist and pro-independence beliefs.

8. **subdue**
   a. By issuing a statement opposed to the re-colonization of Latin America, the United States **subdued** British initiative in the matter.
   b. Spain wanted to **subdue** its former colonies in Latin America and regain control over their affairs.

9. **fortuitous**
   a. By fighting for their independence, Latin Americans demonstrated that they viewed their time as European colonies as **fortuitous**.
   b. Facing the disapproval of many European monarchies by issuing the Monroe Doctrine, the United States surely considered the support of Great Britain as **fortuitous**.

10. **subjugation**
    a. The Monroe Doctrine was a strong **subjugation** of European initiative in the Americas.
    b. During the colonial era, European powers **subjugated** territories in the Americas, destroying native sources of authority and forcing individuals to obey the invaders.

11. **candid**
    a. The correspondence between Richard Rush and George Canning, which openly discussed the problem of Latin American colonization, was surprising for its **candid** portrayal of the two countries' developing positions.
    b. By carefully discussing and preparing his statement opposed to the Holy Alliance's activities in Latin America, President Monroe's final speech before Congress represented a **candid** version of his opinions.

12. **approbation**

The Monroe Doctrine was a decisive **approbation** of Spanish counter-revolutionary activities in the Americas.

b. By declaring the American position opposed to the further colonization of the Western Hemisphere, President Monroe implicitly gave **approbation** to Richard Rush's similar discussions with the British.

The Monroe Doctrine: A Guided Reading

Directions: Answer the following questions, using complete sentences where appropriate.

Part I: The Facts

1. Who issued the "Monroe Doctrine"? What was this person's official position in the United States government at the time?

2. Who was the Monroe Doctrine addressed to?

3. What actions in the Western Hemisphere did the Monroe Doctrine specifically oppose?

Part II: Explain

4. Why was the United States inclined to support independence revolutions in Latin America in the 1820s?

5. What did President Monroe promise to the European colonial powers if they "obeyed" the stipulations of the Monroe Doctrine?

6. Why did the United States make a strong declaration like the Monroe Doctrine in concert with a similar statement by Great Britain?

Part III: Your Opinion (Please explain in a full paragraph on back)

7. In 1823, how capable was the United States to enforce the Monroe Doctrine? What, ultimately, was the document's purpose?

The United States as an Emerging World Power

Event	Dates	Motive for American Involvement	Outcome	Example of American Imperial-ism? (Y/N)
Alaska				
Hawaii				
Venezuela				
Philippines				
Panama Canal				
China				
Mexico				

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Questions for Jigsaw Study Groups

Make sure each group has a copy of their four questions. Explain to them that if they can answer their four questions, they will have no problem sharing all the required information with the class so to completely fill out the chart.

Alaska
1. When did the United States buy Alaska?
2. How much did the United States pay for Alaska?
3. How did the purchase of Alaska fit into Manifest Destiny?
4. What (unexpected) economic benefits did the U.S. realize from its purchase of Alaska?

Hawaii
1. What role did Manifest Destiny play in the American involvement in Hawaii?
2. What economic factors caused the United States to intervene in Hawaii?
3. What military factors caused U.S. involvement?
4. What does annexation mean?

Venezuela
1. Why did the U.S. get involved?
2. Describe the two crises.
3. What role did money play in the two crises?
4. How did the Monroe Doctrine guide U.S. actions in Venezuela?

Philippines
1. How did the crisis arise?
2. Whose side did the U.S. take in the revolution?
3. Why did the U.S. annex the Philippines?
4. What happened as a result of U.S. annexation?

Panama Canal
1. Why did the United States complete the canal?
2. What politician pushed this through?
3. What other country had failed in an attempt to build the canal? Why had they failed?
4. What role did Columbia play in this scenario?

China
1. What motivated U.S. involvement in China?
2. What is a "sphere of influence"?
3. How did the Chinese respond to foreigners?
4. What was the "Open Door" policy?

Mexico
1. What economic motives determined U.S. involvement in Mexico?
2. How did the U.S. believe it was "stabilizing" Mexico?
3. How did Latin America respond to the U.S. invasion of Mexico?
4. Who was Pancho Villa?

Summary of Documents

Document 1, *Excerpts from President Monroe's December 2, 1823 Message to Congress*: In a larger historical context of European political maneuverings, both on the continent and in overseas colonies, President James Monroe stated that affairs in the Western Hemisphere are of vital interest to the United States. His speech to Congress addressed four key points: 1., the "American continents ... are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers"; 2., "the political system of [the European colonial powers] is essentially different ... from that of America" and, Monroe implied, incompatible with the new democratic Western Hemisphere nations; 3., the United States would "consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any [free] portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety"; 4., Although the United States supports all territories and states' attempts to become free and independent, Monroe promised not to interfere with any existing European colonies.

Document 2, Selected correspondence between Richard Rush and George Canning and between Richard Rush and Secretary of State Adams (August - October 1823): This selection represents a series of correspondence between the US representative in Great Britain and the British Secretary of State and the US Secretary of State. This correspondence illustrates the many factors which were considered before issuing the Monroe Doctrine and the influence the British suggestions had on the shape of the document which became known as the Monroe Doctrine. The letters also highlight the many international political considerations which influenced the decision to issue the Doctrine.

Document 3, *Excerpts from the Memoirs of John Quincy Adams:* Adams's memoirs detail about a week's discussion among Monroe's advisors preceding the actual issuance of the "Monroe Doctrine." Adams paints himself as a voice of moderation and pragmatism in these accounts. He states at the outset his belief that the United States would be best served by remaining aloof from the pattern of "convulsions" in European politics. Recognizing that the European Alliance possessed a military might to which the young United States could not compare, Adams wondered whether the U.S. had not "been over-hasty in acknowledging the South American independence." He said the best course for the United States, rather than a belligerent saber-rattling, would be an "earnest remonstrance against the interference of the European powers by force with South America." The modest Adams proceeded to detail how and why Russia and England might be offended by an "ostentatious display of republican principles" on the part of the United States. Finally, Adams explored the possibilities of war breaking out between the U.S. and the European powers: as far fetched as this might seem, he conjured these scenarios with the express purpose of ensuring a cautious, inoffensive declaration from Monroe.

Document 4, *Letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Dated October 24, 1823:* Monroe wrote Jefferson earlier in the fall asking his advice on the matter of recent European attempts to reestablish colonies in the Americas. Jefferson's hand-written reply addressed four key issues, which neatly summarized the new republic's stature and importance in early-nineteenth-century international relations. First, Jefferson reiterated George Washington's famous warning to avoid the entangling alliances of Europe. Second, Jefferson observed that the recent counter-

revolutions in Europe were returning that continent to "despotism," and the goal of the United States "should surely be to make our hemisphere that of freedom." Then, Jefferson weighed the benefits and risks of allying the U.S. with Great Britain in an anti-colonialism declaration. "We should ... cherish a cordial friendship" with the British, Jefferson concluded. Finally, Jefferson mused on the advisability of acquiring some of the former Spanish colonies, most notably Cuba. This last point would be a fascinating one to inject into any discussion of the Spanish-American War that happened eighty years later

Document 5, Editorial from the *Salem Gazette*, December 12, 1823: The editorial expresses a cynical view of the popular acceptance of Monroe's Doctrine. The writer of this editorial feels that the doctrine has received too much praise in the press and he does not seem to have a very high opinion of President Monroe. It is interesting to see the style of political commentary from 1823 and compare the similarities and differences to today's style.

Appendix - Other Assessment Ideas

The "Adams Doctrine" Have students read the "Excerpts from the Memoirs of John Quincy Adams" (document 3). Although Adams actually devised many of the ideas that were eventually expressed by Monroe, discuss how Adams's voice of caution and reason is different from Monroe's as expressed in the Monroe Doctrine. Instruct them to assume the persona of John Quincy Adams and rewrite the Monroe Doctrine in his voice, incorporating both the tone and some of the actual reservations that he expressed in his memoirs. Or, have students rewrite the Monroe Doctrine as "An Isolationist's Doctrine," expressing warnings against beginning an activist foreign policy, either in 1823 or in 1900. Incorporating George Washington's cautions of 1796 would be an ideal jumping-off point for another version of this assignment. Use a more in-depth examination of Washington's Farewell Address to prompt students to design a statement that Washington might have made regarding colonialism, perhaps in response to the Haitian Revolution of the 1790s.

Jefferson on Imperialism Read the "Letter of Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe" (document 4) included in the primary source readings. Especially highlight the second paragraph, where Jefferson discusses the benefits of acquiring Cuba. After studying the Spanish-American War, have the students assume the persona of Thomas Jefferson and comment on the early 1900s debate on Cuban and Philippine annexation. This assignment could easily be a part of a larger inquiry into Jefferson's philosophy, one that required students to call upon not only prior historical knowledge gained during a course but also to use their newly-developed vocabulary and document-analysis skills.

Document List

1. Excerpts from President Monroe's December 2, 1823 message to the Congress that became known as the Monroe Doctrine.

2. Excerpts from correspondence between U.S. Minister to Great Britain Richard Rush and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams.

3. Excerpts from John Quincy Adams' Memoirs covering cabinet meetings at which December 2, 1823 message was discussed.

4. Text of letter from Thomas Jefferson to President Monroe laying out the former's views on how to respond to the British suggestion of a joint declaration.

5. Editorial from a contemporary paper summarizing how the President's message had been received in America.

DOCUMENT 1

Excerpts from President Monroe's December 2, 1823 Message to Congress

At the beginning of the first session of the Eighteenth Congress, President Monroe sent a message to the Congress laying out his views of the nation's public affairs as they stood at the time – the equivalent of a modern-day State of the Union Address. The message is remembered primarily for those foreign policy passages that became known as the *Monroe Doctrine*. At the time of the message, the United States was the only country to have officially recognized the newly-independent states of South America. Throughout 1823, the United States was engaged in negotiations with Russia and Great Britain over the rights and interests of the two nations in the northwest coast of the North American continent. In reporting on these negotiations in the message, President Monroe stated publicly for the first time his government's view that the American continents were not to be considered as subjects for future colonization. Later in the speech, the President specifically addressed the question of Spanish America. In taking up this subject, he declared that the United States would "*consider any attempt on [the part of the Holy Alliance] to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.*" Once again, President Monroe laid down the marker that the United States considered the entire hemisphere – both American continents – to be of vital interest to the United States. This concept has guided U.S. foreign policy toward South America and Canada since then.

As the message is quite long, we provide below the text of the two portions of the speech that form the basis for the Monroe Doctrine:

> "*At the proposal of the Russian Imperial Government, made through the minister of the Emperor residing here, a full power and instructions have been transmitted to the minister of the United States at St. Petersburg to arrange by amicable negotiation the respective rights and interests of the two nations on the northwest coast of this continent. A similar proposal had been made by His Imperial Majesty to the Government of Great Britain, which has likewise been acceded to. The Government of the United States has been desirous by this friendly proceeding of manifesting the great value which they have invariably attached to the friendship of the Emperor and their solicitude to cultivate in the best understanding with his Government. In the discussions to which this interest has given rise and in the arrangements by which they may terminate the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.*"

> "*It was stated at the commencement of the last session that a great effort was then making in Spain and Portugal to improve the condition of the people of those countries, and that it appeared to be conducted with extraordinary moderation. It need scarcely be remarked that the result has been so far very different from what was then anticipated. Of events in that quarter of the globe, with which we have so much intercourse and from which we derive our origin, we have always been anxious and interested spectators. The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellow men on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments, and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most*

enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security.

The late events in Spain and Portugal shew that Europe is still unsettled....Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government de facto *as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none. But in regard to those continents circumstances are eminently and conspicuously different. It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distances from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the Untied States to leave the parties to themselves, in the hope that other powers will pursue the same course.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Document 2

#1	8/19	Text of Rush's letter to Adams regarding British Foreign Secretary Canning's proposal to work together with the US on Spanish America (*received October 9th*)
#2	8/20	Text of Canning's note to Rush setting out principles on which the United States and Great Britain were to agree
#3	8/23	Rush's response to Canning's note of 8/20
#4	8/23	Rush's cable to Adams regarding 8/20 Canning note (*received October 9th*)
#5	8/23	Text of Canning's note to Rush regarding European congress to decide fate of Spanish America
#6	8/27	Text of Rush's response to Canning's note of 8/23
#7	8/28	Rush's letter to Adams reporting on Canning's note of 8/23 and his (Rush's) response of 8/27. Rush states that if Great Britain recognizes the Spanish colonies, he will declare that the U.S. will not remain inactive under an attack by the Holy Alliance upon the Spanish colonies (*Received October 9th*)
#8	8/31	Canning's note to Rush expressing concern about the delay caused by Rush's need to get specific instructions from the President or Secretary of State. Canning backs away from original position. (This is a response to Rush's note to Canning of 8/27.)
#9	9/8	Rush's letter to Adams reporting that Great Britain is not prepared to recognize Spanish American colonies immediately (*Received November 5th*)
#10	9/19	Rush's letter to Adams reporting on conversation with Canning. This letter serves as a summary of Rush's conversations to date with Canning on the Spanish American colonies (*Received November 3rd*)
#11	10/10	Rush's letter to Adams reporting on Canning's sudden disinterest in discussing the Spanish-American situation. (*Received November 19th*)
#12,13	11/29-30	Excerpts from the instructions sent to Richard Rush laying out the U.S. Government's official response to George Canning's overtures in August and September. Although drafted prior to the President's message to the Congress, the instructions were received in London well afterwards.

Originals

#14	8/19	Original of page 1 of Rush's letter to Secretary of State Adams dated August 19, 1823
#15	8/20	Original of British Foreign Minister Canning's note to Rush dated August 20, 1823
#16	8/23	Original of Canning's note to Rush dated August 23, 1823
#17	8/27	Original of page 1 of Rush's response to Canning's note of 8/23
#18	8/28	Original of page 1 of Rush's letter to Adams dated August 28, 1823

INTRODUCTION TO DOCUMENT 2

SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN RICHARD RUSH AND GEORGE CANNING AND BETWEEN RICHARD RUSH AND SECRETARY OF STATE ADAMS[1]

(August - October, 1823)

The correspondence included in this section was selected because of its pertinence to the eventual formulation of President Monroe's December 2, 1823 message to the Congress which contained passages that later became known as the *Monroe Doctrine*. As explained in the introduction, the foreign policy portions of the President's address were largely shaped of the suggestion by British Foreign Minister Canning that the United States and Great Britain should work together to counter any movement by the Holy Alliance to reestablish a foothold in Spanish America.[2] You will notice that the first three letters from Minister Richard Rush to Secretary of State Adams were all received on October 9th, well after they were first written. On October 10th, Rush wrote to Adams reporting the sudden disinterest of Canning in discussing the topic of Spanish America. We now know that the British had by this point given up on working with the United States and had begun discussions with the French. Rush's October 10th letter was not received in Washington until November 19th. The delay in receiving the letters was due, of course, to the fact that they were all sent by boat and the boats did not sail all that frequently.

The documents are broken into sets of correspondence that go together. For example, the items in Group A represent the initial exchange between Canning and Rush on the question of working together in Spanish America. Each set of letters demonstrates the role of the U.S. Foreign Service, in this case exemplified by the U.S. Minister to Great Britain, Richard Rush. After being approached by Canning, Rush immediately wrote to his boss, the Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams. Before Rush could receive any response (remember that these letters were sent by boat), Canning wrote to Rush on the same topic, laying out in more detail the British position. Rush responded to the note from Canning based on guidance he had already received from the Department of State[3] and then sent copies of the exchange to Adams with an explanatory message. This is typical of how diplomatic exchanges were carried out at the time. While the text has been included for all, some facsimiles have also been provided in order to give students a better sense of what the documents really looked like. The originals are provided at the end of document 2 if the teachers wishes to use them.

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[1] Text of the correspondence was taken from Volume III of "Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of Latin America" (New York: Oxford University Press, 1925). Copies of the original correspondence were obtained from the National Archives.

[2] Of course, there were other events that influenced the debate. In particular, the note received from Baron de Tuyl regarding his government's decision not to recognize representatives from any of the nations of the New World.

[3] On July 22, 1823, Adams wrote to Rush: "... The exclusive rights of Spain to any part of the American continents have ceased ... These Independent Nations will possess the rights incident to that condition and ... A necessary consequence of this state of things will be that the American Continents henceforth will no longer be subjects of colonization." (Hamilton, Stanislaus Murray, Ed., *Writings of James Monroe, Volume VI, 1817-1823*, (1902))

Document 2 #1
Text of Rush to Adams, August 19, 1823

Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State of the United States[1]

[EXTRACT]

LONDON *August 19, 1823*

SIR: When my interview with Mr. Canning on Saturday was about to close, I transiently asked him whether, notwithstanding the late news from Spain, we might not still hope that the Spaniards would get the better of all their difficulties. I had allusion to the defection of Ballasteros, in Andalusia, an event seeming to threaten with new dangers the constitutional cause. His reply was general, importing nothing more than his opinion of the increased difficulties and dangers with which, undoubtedly, this event was calculated to surround the Spanish cause.

Pursuing the topick of Spanish affairs, I remarked that should France ultimately effect her purposes in Spain, there was at least the consolation left, that Great Britain would not allow her to go farther and lay her hands upon the Spanish colonies, bringing them too under her grasp. I here had in my mind the sentiments promulgated upon this subject in Mr. Canning's note to the British ambassador at Paris of the 31st of March, during the negociations that preceded the invasion of Spain. It will be recollected that the British government say in this note, that time and the course of events appeared to have substantially decided the question of the separation of the colonies from the mother country , although their formal recognition as independent states by Gt. Britain might be hastened or retarded by external circumstances, as well as by the internal condition of those new states themselves; and that as his Britannic majesty disclaimed all intention of appropriating to himself the smallest portion of the late Spanish possessions in America, he was also satisfied that no attempt would be made by France to bring any of them under *her* dominion, either by conquest, or by cession from Spain.

By this we are to understand, in terms sufficiently distinct, that Great Britain would not be passive under such an attempt by France, and Mr. Canning, on my having referred to this note, asked me what I thought my government would say to going hand in hand with his, in the same sentiment; not as he added that any concert in action under it, could become necessary between the two countries, but that the simple fact of our being known to hold the same sentiment would, he had no doubt, by its moral effect, put down the intention on the part of France, admitting that she should ever entertain it. This belief was founded he said upon the large share of the maritime power of the world which Gt. Britain and the United States shared between them, and the consequent influence which the knowledge that they held a common opinion upon a question on which such large maritime interests, present and future, hung, could not fail to produce upon the rest of the world.

I replied that in what manner my government would look upon such a suggestion, I was unable to say, but that I would communicate it in the same informal manner in which he threw it out. I said, however, that I did not think I should do so with full advantage, unless he would at the same time enlighten me as to the precise situation in which His Majesty's government stood at this moment in relation to those new states, and especially on the material point of their own independence.

He replied that Great Britain certainly never again intended to lend her instrumentality or aid, whether by mediation or otherwise towards making up the dispute between Spain and her colonies; but that if this result could still be brought about, she would not interfere to *prevent* it. Upon my intimating that I had supposed that all idea of Spain ever recovering her authority over the colonies had long since gone by, he explained by saying that he did not mean to controvert that opinion, for he too believed that the day had arrived when all America might be considered as lost to Europe, so far as the tie of political dependence was concerned. All that he meant was, that if Spain and the colonies should still be able to bring the dispute, not yet totally extinct between them, to a close upon terms satisfactory to both sides, and which should at the same time secure to Spain commercial or other advantages not extended to other nations, that Great Britain would not object to a compromise in this spirit of preference to Spain. All that she would ask would be, to stand upon as favoured a footing as any other nation after Spain. Upon my again alluding to the improbability of the dispute ever settling down now even upon this basis, he said that it was not his intention to maintain such a position, and that he had expressed himself as above rather for the purpose of indicating the feeling which this cabinet still had towards Spain in relation to the controversy, than of predicting results.

Wishing, however, to be still more specifically informed, I asked whether Great Britain was at this moment taking any step, or contemplating any, which had reference to the recognition to those states, this being the point in which we felt the chief interest.

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[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX.

Document 2 #1
Text of Rush to Adams, August 19, 1823, Page 2

He replied that she had taken none whatever, as yet, but was upon the eve of taking one, not final, but preparatory, and which would still leave her at large to recognize or not according to the position of events at a future period. The measure in question was, to send out one or more individuals under authority from this government to South America, not strictly diplomatic, but clothed with powers in the nature of a commission of inquiry, and which in short he described as analagous to those exercised by our commissioners in 1817; and that upon the result of this commission much might depend as to the ulterior conduct of Gt. Britain. I asked whether I was to understand that it would comprehend all the new states, or which of them; to which he replied that, for the present it would be limited to Mexico.

Reverting to this first idea he again said, that he hoped that France would not, should even events in the Peninsula be favorable to her, extend her views to South America for the purpose of reducing the colonies , nominally perhaps for Spain, but in effect to subserve ends of her own; but that in case she should mediate such a policy, he was satisfied that the knowledge of the United States being opposed to it as well as Gt. Britain, could not fail to have its influence in checking her steps. In this way he thought good might be done by prevention, and peaceful prospects all round increased. As to the form in which such knowledge might be made to reach France, and even the other powers of Europe, he said in conclusion that that might probably be arranged in a manner that would be free from objection.

I again told him that I would convey his suggestions to you for the information of the president, and impart to him whatever reply I might receive. My own inference rather is, that his proposition was a fortuitous one; yet he entered into it I thought with some interest, and appeared to receive with a corresponding satisfaction the assurance I gave him that it should be made known to the President. I did not feel myself at liberty to express any opinion unfavorable to it, and was as careful to give none in its favor.

Document 2 # 2
Text of Canning to Rush, August 20, 1823

George Canning, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, to Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain[1]

Private & Confidential. FOREIGN OFFICE, *August 20, 1823*

MY DEAR SIR: Before leaving Town, I am desirous of bringing before you in a more distinct, but still in an unofficial and confidential, shape, the question which we shortly discussed the last time that I had the pleasure of seeing you.

Is not the moment come when our Governments might understand each other as to the Spanish American Colonies? And if we can arrive at such an understanding, would it not be expedient for ourselves, and beneficial for all the world, that the principles of it should be clearly settled and plainly avowed?

For ourselves we have no disguise.

1. We conceive the recovery of the Colonies by Spain to be hopeless.

2. We conceive the question of the Recognition of them, as Independent States, to be one of time and circumstances.

3. We are however, by no means disposed to throw any impediment in the way of an arrangement between them, and the mother country by amicable negotiation.

4. We aim not at the possession of any portion of them ourselves.

5. We could not see any portion of them transferred to any other Power, with indifference.

If these opinions and feelings are as I firmly believe them to be, common to your Government with ours, why should we hesitate mutually to confide them to each other; and to declare them in the face of the world?

If there be any European Power which cherishes other projects, which looks to a forcible enterprize for reducing the Colonies to subjugation, on the behalf or in the name of Spain; or which meditates the acquisition of any part of them to itself, by cession or by conquest; such a declaration on the part of your government and ours would be at once the most effectual and the least offensive mode of intimating our joint disapprobation of such projects.

It would at the same time put an end to all the jealousies of Spain with respect to her remaining Colonies-- and to the agitation which prevails in those Colonies, an agitation which it would be but humane to allay; being determined (as we are) not to profit by encouraging it.--

Do you conceive that under the power which you have recently received, you are authorized to enter into negotiation and to sign any Convention upon this subject? Do you conceive , if that be not within your competence, you could exchange with me ministerial notes upon it?

Nothing could be more gratifying to me than to join with you in such a work, and, I am persuaded, there has seldom, in the history of the world, occurred an opportunity, when so small an effort, of two friendly Governments, might produce so unequivocal a good and prevent such extensive calamities.

I shall be absent from London but three weeks at the utmost: but never so far distant, but that I can receive and reply to any communication, within three or four days.

I have the honor [etc.].

[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX, enclosed in Rush to Adams, August 23, 1823.

Document 2 #3
Text of Rush Response to Canning, August 23, 1823

Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, to George Canning, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain[1]

LONDON, *August 23, 1823*

MY DEAR SIR: Your unofficial and confidential note of the 20th instant reached me yesterday, and has commanded from me all the reflection due to the interest of its subject, and to the friendly spirit of confidence upon which it is so emphatically founded.

The government of the United States having, in the most formal manner, acknowledged the independence of the late Spanish provinces in America, desires nothing more anxiously than to see this independence maintained with stability, and under auspices that may promise prosperity and happiness to these new states themselves, as well as advantage to the rest of the world. As conducing to these great ends, my government has always desired, and still desires, to see them received into the family of nations by the powers of Europe, and especially, I may add, by Great Britain.

My government is also under a sincere conviction, that the epoch has arrived when the interests of humanity and justice, as well as all other interests would be essentially subserved by the general recognition of these states.

Making these remarks, I believe I may confidently say, that the sentiments unfolded in your note are fully those which belong also to my government.

It conceives the recovery of the colonies by Spain, to be hopeless.

It would throw no impediment in the way of an arrangement between them and the mother country, by amicable negociation--supposing an arrangement of this nature to be possible.

It does not aim at the possession of any portion of those communities, for or on behalf of the United States.

It would regard as highly unjust, and fruitful of disastrous consequences, any attempt on the part of any European power to take possession of them by conquest, or by cession; or on any ground or pretext whatever.

But, in what manner my government might deem it expedient to avow these principles and feelings, or express its disapprobation of such projects as the last, are points which none of my instructions, or the power which I have recently received, embrace; and they involve I am forced to add considerations of too much delicacy for me to act upon them in advance.

It will yield me particular pleasure to be the organ of promptly causing to be brought under the notice of the President, the opinions and views of which you have made me the depository upon this subject, and I am of nothing more sure than that he will fully appreciate their intrinsick interest, and not less the frank and friendly feelings towards the United States in which they have been conceived and communicated to me on your part.

Nor, do I take too much upon myself when I anticipate the peculiar satisfaction the President will also derive from the intimation which you have not scrupled to afford me, as to the just and liberal determinations of His Majesty's government, in regard to the colonies which still remain to Spain.

With a full reciprocation of the personal cordiality which your note also breathes, and begging you to accept [etc.].

[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX, enclosed in Rush to Adams, August 23, 1823.

Document 2 #4
Text of Rush to Adams, August 23, 1823

Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State of the United States[1]

LONDON, *August 23, 1823*

SIR: I yesterday received from Mr. Canning a note headed "private and confidential" setting before me in a more distinct form the proposition respecting South America affairs, which he communicated to me in conversation, on the 16th, as already reported in my number 323. Of his note I lost no time in transmitting a copy for your information, as well as a copy of my answer to it written and sent this day.

In shaping the answer on my own judgment alone, I feel that I have had a task of some embarrassment to perform, and shall be happy if it receives the President's approbation.

I believe that this government has the subject of Mr. Canning's proposition much at heart, and certainly his note bears, upon the face of it, a character of cordiality towards the government of the United States which cannot escape notice.

I have therefore thought it proper to impart to my note a like character, and to meet the points laid down in his, as far as I could, consistently with other and paramount considerations.

These I conceived to be chiefly twofold; first the danger of pledging my government to any measure or course of policy which might in any degree, now or hereafter, implicate it in the federative system of Europe; and, secondly, I have felt myself alike without warrant to take a step which might prove exceptionable in the eyes of France, with whom our pacifick and friendly relations remain I presume undisturbed, whatever may be our speculative abhorrence of her attack upon the liberties of Spain.

In framing my answer, I had also to consider what was due to Spain herself, and I hope that I have not overlooked what was due to the colonies.

The whole subject is open to views on which my mind has deliberated anxiously. If the matter of my answer shall be thought to bear properly upon motives and considerations which belong most materially to the occasion, it will be a source of great satisfaction to me.

The tone of earnestness in Mr. Canning's note and the force of some of his expressions, naturally start the inference that the British cabinet cannot be without its serious apprehensions that ambitious enterprises are meditated against the independence of the South American states. Whether by France alone, I cannot now say, on any authentick grounds.

I have the honor [etc.].

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[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX.

Document 2 # 5
Text of Canning to Rush, August 23, 1823

George Canning, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, to Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain[1]

Private & confidential. LONDON, *August 23, 1823*

MY DEAR SIR: Since I wrote to you on the 20th, an additional motive has occurred for wishing that we might be able to come to some understanding on the part of our respective Governments on the subject of my letter, to come to it soon, and to be at liberty to announce it to the world.

It is this. I have received notice, but not such a notice as imposes upon me the necessity of any immediate answer or proceeding--that so soon as the military objects in Spain are achieved (of which the French expect, how justly I know not a very speedy achievement) a proposal will be made for a Congress, or some less formal concert and consultation, specially upon the affairs of Spanish America.

I need not point out to you all the complications to which this proposal, however dealt with by us, may lead.

Pray receive this communication in the same confidence with the former, and believe me with great truth [etc.].

[1] MS. Dispatches for Great Britain, XXIX, enclosed to Rush to Adams, August 28, 1823.

Document 2 # 6
Text of Rush Response to Canning, August 27, 1823

Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, to George Canning, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain[1]

LONDON, *August 27, 1823.*

MY DEAR SIR: Your favor of the 23d, dated at Liverpool, got to hand yesterday, and I perceive in its contents new motives for attaching importance to the subject to which it relates.

In the note which I had the honor to address to you on the 23rd, two principal ideas have place.

1. That the government of the United States earnestly desires to see maintained, permanently, the independence of the late Spanish provinces in America.

2. That it would view with uneasiness any attempt on the part of the powers of Europe to intrench upon that independence.

I will add, in the present note, that my government would view with like uneasiness any interference whatever, by the powers of Europe in the affairs of those new states, unsolicited by the latter and against their will. It would regard the convening of a congress, for example, at this period of time, to deliberate upon their affairs, as a measure uncalled for, and indicative of a policy highly unfriendly to the tranquillity of the world. It could never look with insensibility upon such an exercise of European jurisdiction over communities now of right exempt from it, and entitled to regulate their own concerns unmolested from abroad. In speaking thus, I am entirely confident that I do nothing more than strictly interpret the opinions of my government, and of the whole people of the United States. It is only as to the mode in which the former might choose to give expression to its strong disapprobation of such enterprizes, that my instructions at this moment, as I think, fail me.

If you suppose any of the sentiments of this, or my preceding, note, susceptible of being moulded by me into a form promising to achieve the object proposed in your note of the 20th, or make any useful approximation to it, I shall be most happy to take into consideration whatever suggestions you may favor me with, towards this end, either immediately in writing, or in the more unreserved intercourse of conversation when you return to town, being in this respect altogether at your disposal.

I will, for the present, only add, that could His Majesty's government see fit to consider the time *now* arrived for a full acknowledgment of the independence of the South American states by Great Britain, it is my unequivocal belief, entertained not on light grounds, that it would accelerate the steps of my government in a course of policy intimated as being common to this government, for the welfare of those states. It would also naturally place *me* in a new position in my further conferences with you, upon this interesting subject.

Begging to assure you that the notes with which you favor me are treated in the spirit of confidence with which they are written, I have the honor [etc.].

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[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX, enclosed in Rush to Adams, August 28, 1823.

Document 2 # 7
Text of Rush to Adams, August 28, 1823

Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State of the United States[1]

LONDON, *August 28, 1823.*

SIR: Since my last despatch, I have received a second confidential note from Mr. Canning, dated at Liverpool, the 23rd, a copy of which and of my answer, dated yesterday, are enclosed. The subject of our correspondence being, as appears to me, of deep interest, I think proper to apprize you of it from step to step, without waiting for the further developments to which it may possible lead. I hence hope that this communication will be on time to accompany my last, in the packet ship that will leave Liverpool on the first of September.

Mr. Canning having now distinctly informed me, that he has received notice of measures being in projection by the powers of Europe relative to the affairs of Spanish America, as soon as the French succeed in their military movements in Spain,--which it would seem they expect soon to do,--I cannot avoid seeing this subject under the complications to which Mr. Canning alludes.

My first object will be to urge upon this government the obvious expediency of an immediate and unreserved recognition of the independence of the South American states.

It will be seen by my note to Mr. Canning of yesterday, that I have made a beginning in this work, and, should the opportunity be afforded me, it is my intention to follow it up zealously.

Should I be asked by Mr. Canning, whether, *if the recognition be made by Great Britain without more delay*, I am, on my part, prepared to make a declaration in the name of my government that it will not remain inactive under an attack upon the independence of those states by the Holy Alliance, the present determination of my judgment is, that I will make this declaration, explicitly, and avow it before the world.

I am not unaware of the responsibility which I should, by such a measure, assume upon myself. My reasons for assuming it, I have not, at present, the leisure to recount with the requisite fulness. The leading ones would be, in brief, as follow:

1. I may thereby aid in achieving an immediate and positive good to those rising states in our hemisphere; for such I should conceive their recognition at this juncture by Great Britain, in itself, to be.

2. Such recognition, cooperating with the declaration which this government has already in effect made, that it will not look quietly on if Spanish America is attacked, and followed up by a similar (though not joint) declaration from me that neither will the United States, would prove at least a probable means of warding off the attack. The minister of foreign affairs of this government, it appears, is under a strong persuasion that it would forestall it, and this without the recognition by England being, as yet, a part of his case.

3. Should the issue of things be different, and events notwithstanding arise threatening the peace of the United States, or otherwise seriously to commit them, under such a declaration from me, it would still remain with the wisdom of my government to disavow my conduct, as I should manifestly have acted without its previous warrant, though hoping for its subsequent sanction. I would take to myself all the reproach, consoled if not justified under the desire that had animated me to render benefits of great magnitude to the cause of South American independence and freedom at a point of time, which, if lost, was not to be regained; and believing that, at all events, I should have rendered some benefits to it, in being instrumental towards accelerating the recognition of Great Britain.

My conduct might be disavowed in any issue of the transaction, and I should still not be left without a hope, that the President would see in it proofs of good intention, mixed with a zeal for the advancement of great political interests, not appearing at the moment, to be indifferent ultimately to the welfare of the United States themselves.

The result of my reasoning in a word then, is, that I find myself placed in a situation in which, by deciding and acting promptly, I may do much publick good, whilst publick mischiefs may be arrested by the controuling hand of my government, should my conduct be likely to draw any down.

I conclude with the usual assurances [etc.].

[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX.

Document 2 # 8
Text of Canning to Rush, August 31, 1823

George Canning, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, to Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain[1]

Private & confidential. STORRS, WESTMORELAND, *August 1, 1823.*

MY DEAR SIR: I have now to acknowledge the receipt of your answer to both my letters; & whatever may be the practical result of our confidential communication it is an unmixed satisfaction to me that the spirit in which it began on my part, has been met so cordially on yours.

To a practical result eminently beneficial I see no obstacle; except in your want of specific powers, & in the delay which may intervene before you can procure them, & during which events may get before us.

Had you felt yourself authorized to entertain any formal propositions, and to decide upon it, without reference home, I would immediately have taken measures for assembling my Colleagues in London, upon my return, in order to be enabled to submit to you as the *act* of my government all that I have stated to you as my own *sentiments* & theirs. But with such a delay in prospect, I think I should hardly be justified in proposing to bind ourselves to any thing positively, & unconditionally; and think on the other hand that a proposition *qualified* either in respect to the contingency of your concurrence in it, or with reference to possible change of circumstances, would want the decision & frankness which I should wish to mark our proceeding.

Not that I anticipate any change of circumstances, which could vary the views opened to you in my first letter:--nor that, after what you have written to me in return, I apprehend any essential dissimilarity of views on the part of your Government.

But *we* must not place ourselves in a position in which, if called upon from other quarters for an opinion, we cannot give a clear & definite account not only of what we think & feel, but of what we have done or are doing, upon the matter in question. To be able to say, in answer to such an appeal, that the Ud. States & Great Britain concur in thinking so & so--would be well. To anticipate any such appeal by a voluntary declaration to the same effect would be still better. But to have to say that we are in communication with the U. States, but have no conclusive understanding with them, would be inconvenient--Our free agency would thus be fettered with respect to other powers; while our agreement with you would be yet unascertained.

What appears to me, therefore, the most advisable is that you should see in my unofficial communication enough hope of good to warrant you in requiring Powers & Instructions from your Government on this point, in addition to the others upon which you have recently been instructed & empowered; treating that communication *not* as a proposition made to you, but as the evidence of the nature of a proposition which it would have been my desire to make to you, if I had found you provided with authority to entertain it.

I have the honor [etc.].

[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX, enclosed in Rush to Adams, September 8, 1823.

Document 2 #9
Text of Rush to Adams September 8, 1823
Received November 5

Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State of the United States[1]

LONDON, *September 8, 1823*

SIR: I yesterday received another confidential note from Mr. Canning, dated the thirty first of August, a copy of which I have the honor to enclose herewith for the President's information.

From this note it would appear, that Mr. Canning is not prepared to pledge this government to an immediate recognition of the independence of the South American states. I shall renew to him a proposition to this effect when we meet; but should he continue to draw back from it, I shall on my part not act upon the overture contained in his first note, not feeling myself at liberty to accede to them in the name of my government, but upon the basis of an equivalent. This equivalent as I now view the subject could be nothing less than the immediate and full acknowledgment of those states, or some of them, by Gt. Britain.

I shall send this despatch by this evening's mail to Liverpool, and have reason to hope that it will go in a ship that sails on the eighth, whereby there will have been not a moment's delay in putting you in possession of all the correspondence that has passed between Mr. Canning and me, or that now seems likely to pass, upon this delicate subject. I cannot help thinking, however, that its apparent urgency may, after all, be lessened by the turn which we may yet witness in affairs, military and political, in Spain.

I have the honor [etc.].

[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX.

Document 2 # 10
Excerpts from Text of Rush to Adams, September 19, 1823

Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State of the United States[1]

LONDON, *September 19, 1823*

SIR: Mr. Secretary Canning returned to town about a week ago, and I had an interview with him yesterday at the foreign office, at his request.

He entered at once upon the subject of Spanish America, remarking that he thought it claimed precedence, at present, over all others between us. Military events in the Peninsula seemed every day to be drawing nearer to a crisis in favor of the French arms, and the political arrangements projected afterwards, would, there was good reason to suppose, be immediately directed to the affairs of the late colonies. He would therefore not give up the hope, notwithstanding the footing upon which this subject appeared to be placed at the close of our recent correspondence, that I might yet see my way towards a substantial acquiescence in his proposals. They were hourly acquiring new importance and urgency under aspects that neither of our governments could be insensible to.

Having perceived, since we had last been together, the publication in the newspapers of the correspondence between a portion of the merchants of commercial agents, for the South American states, I asked Mr. Canning whether I was to infer that this government was speedily about to adopt such a measure, to which he replied in the affirmative, saying that commercial agents would certainly be soon appointed, and sent out to the proper ports in those quarters.

As to the proposals he had submitted to me, I said that I was sure that he would himself appreciate the delicacy of the ground upon which I stood. The United States, it was true, would view any attempt on the part of France and the continental alliance to re-subjugate those new states, as a transcendent act of national injustice, and indicative of a progressive and most alarming ambition. Yet, to join Great Britain in a declaration to this effect might lay them open in some respects to consequences upon the character and extent of which it became my duty to reflect with great caution, before I made up my mind to meet the responsibilities of them. The value of the declaration, it was agreed, would depend upon its being formally made known to Europe. Would not such a step wear the appearance of the United States implicating themselves in the political connexions of Europe? Would it not be acceding, in this instance at least, to the policy of one of its leading powers in opposition to the projects avowed by other powers? This heretofore had been no part of the system of the United States. Their foreign policy had been essentially bottomed on the maxim of keeping peace and harmony with all powers, without offending any. Upon the institutions as upon the dissentions of foreign nations, the government and the people of the United States might have, and might express, their speculative opinions; but it had been no part of their past conduct to interfere with the one, or, being unmolested themselves, to become parties to the other. In this broad principle laid one of my difficulties under his proposal. . . .

He said that the case being new, might serve to account for my not being in possession of previous or specifick powers respecting it, but that its very nature seemed to preclude delay. He had the strongest reasons for believing, that the cooperation of the United States with England through my instrumentality, afforded with promptitude, would ward off altogether the meditated jurisdiction of the European powers over the affairs of the new world. Delay this cooperation until I could receive specifick powers, and the day might go by; the progress of events was rapid; the evil might come on. A portion of it might and probably would be consummated, and if Great Britain could by herself afterwards arrest it, there was at least more of uncertainty in this, besides that preventive measures were always, whether on the score of humanity or efficacy, preferable to those that were remedial. Why then should the United States whose institutions always, and whose policy in this instance, approximated them so much more closely to Great Britain than to any other power in Europe, hesitate to act with her to promote a common object approved alike by both; to achieve a common good estimated alike by both? To this effect did he express himself, amplifying his ideas of which I present but the substance and outline. He finished by saying, that his station and duties as the organ of this government would oblige him to call upon me in another way, if I continued to feel unable to assent to his past proposals; for, said he, "if a congress be in fact assembled on the affairs of Spanish America, I shall ask that you, as the representative of the United States at this court, be invited to attend it. If you are not invited, I shall reserve to myself the option of determining whether or not Great Britain will send a representative to it. If you are invited and refuse to go, I shall still reserve to myself the same option. Hence you see the complication of the whole subject; hence you see how essential it is, in the opinion of Great Britain, that the United States should not be left out of view, if Europe determine to take cognizance of the subject." These last declarations could not fail to make an impression upon me, and I give them as nearly as may be in his own words.

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[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX.

Document 2 # 10
Text of Rush to Adams, September 19, 1823, Page 2

The complication of the subject said I, continuing the discussion, may be cured at once, and by Great Britain. Let Great Britain immediately and unequivocally acknowledge the independence of the new states. This will put an end to all difficulty. The moment is auspicious, every thing invites to the measure, justice, expediency, humanity; the repose of the world, the cause of national independence, the prosperity and happiness of both hemispheres. Let Britain but adopt this measure--so just in itself, so recommended by the point of time before us--the cause of all Spanish America triumphs. The European congress may meet afterwards, if it sees fit!

He said that such a measure was open to objection, but asked if he was to understand that it would make any difference in my powers or conduct.

I replied, the greatest difference. I had frankly told him that I had no powers that would cover my consent to his proposals in the shape that he had first made them to me. I would as frankly say, that I had no specifick powers to consent to them coupled with the fact of this government acknowledging at once the independence of Spanish America. But, this being done, I would stand upon my general powers. I had no hesitation in saying that, under their warrant, I would put forth with Great Britain the declaration to which he had invited me; that I would do so in the name of my government, and consent to its being promulgated, with all the present validity that I could give it, to the world. I had carefully examined all my instructions for years past bearing either directly or remotely on the great cause of these states. I saw in them all, so steady and so strong a desire for the firm establishment of their freedom and independence; I saw, too sometimes in their letter and always in their spirit, so concurrent a desire to see their independence acknowledged by Great Britain, that I would not scruple, on seeing the latter event brought about, to lend my official name, as far as it could go, to the course which he had proposed, and count upon my government stamping with its subsequent sanction the part which I acted. If I could be in any degree instrumental towards accelerating this acknowledgment, I should feel that I had achieved a great and positive good. Upon British recognition hung not indeed the final, but perhaps in an eminent degree the present tranquillity and happiness of those states. Their final safety was not, as I believed, at the mercy of European dictation; but we could not disguise that it might prolong their sufferings, and throw fresh clouds over all their prospects. It was in this manner that I expressed myself ,displaying to him with entire candour my feelings and determinations as well as the precise ground upon which the steps that I took, whatever they might be, would rest.

He said that among the objections to recognizing at present, was still that of the uncertain condition, internally, of these new states, or, at any rate, of some of them. He had, for example sent an agent in January last to Mexico, supposing that Iturbide was at the head of affairs; but by the time he had arrived, a fresh revolution had set up other representatives of the executive power. The same internal vicissitudes were to be remarked in others of these communities, more to the south.

Another objection he said was started by the circumstances of this very Colombian loan, which had created so much agitation on the stock exchange of London for a twelvemonth past. It was true, that as this subject actually stood, the British Government owed no obligation to those British subjects who had embarked their money in an adventure of the safety of which they had themselves chosen to be the judges. But suppose the recognition to have been made by Great Britain sometime ago, as was wished, and the loan to have followed, would not the duty of countenance and protection have attached, and might not this serve to portray the hazards of coming too hastily into relations with distant states whose credit or whose means, in their dealing with the subjects of other nations, did not as yet appear to rest on any sure or adequate foundations? . . .

It was thus that I endeavoured to develope what I suppose to be the views and convictions of the President upon this important subject. Our conversation was prolonged to a couple of hours, and, although informal, was, I need not say, of extraordinary interest. It was characterised by the freedom with which I have reported it. In condensing it within the limits of these sheets, I can only hope that I have faithfully preserved its material points. I do not flatter myself with any sanguine belief, that this government will be prepared to yield to my appeals in favor of immediate recognition; but I am to have another interview with Mr. Canning some day next week, or the week after, which he is yet to name, and I can only say that I will zealously renew and extend these appeals as opportunities may be fitly afforded me. . . .

Should a congress be assembled under the guilty intention and hope of crushing South American freedom, and I receive an invitation to it, I shall not go, though the time for me to say so will not arrive until the invitation comes. For, first, I have no warrant from the President for such a step. Next, I infer from Mr. Canning's intimations, that Great Britain will send no representative to it, should the United States have none there. I should in this manner, by my absence, do more good than I possibly could by my presence. It is thus that I already make known my contingent determinations upon events that are contingent!

Mr. Canning was not, as it appeared, aware until yesterday, that I was prepared to come into his views, on condition of this government immediately and formally recognizing the new states. I had intended that the concluding sentence of my note to him of the twenty seventh of August should start this idea to his mind, though I had designedly abstained from putting it forth more openly at that period of our correspondence.

I have the honor [etc.].

Document 2 # 11
Excerpt from Text of Rush to Adams, October 10, 1823

Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain, to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State of the United States[1]

[EXTRACTS]

LONDON, *October 10, 1823*

SIR: At the conference with Mr. Canning the day before yesterday, he said nothing of Spanish American affairs, except barely to remark at parting, that he should send off consuls to the new states very soon, perhaps in the course of this month. I asked whether *consuls* or commercial agents. He said he believed they might as well be called by the former name, as they would be invested with the powers and charged with the duties that belonged to the consular office. I asked if they would be received in that capacity by governments between which and Great Britain no political or diplomatic relations had yet been formed. He said, that this he did not know with any certainty; he rather supposed that they would be received.

I saw him again at the foreign office yesterday, and he said not one single word relative to South America, although the occasion was altogether favorable for resuming the topick, had he been disposed to resume it. I therefore consider that all further discussion between us in relation to it is now at an end. I had myself regarded the questions involved in the discussion as essentially changed by the arrival of the news of the convention of the 4th of July between Buenos Ayres and the commissioners from Spain; and of the complete annihilation of the remnant of the royal forces in Colombia under Morales, on the third of August, both which pieces of intelligence have reached England since the twenty sixth of September, the date of my last conference with Mr. Canning on the South American subject.

The termination of the discussion between us may be though somewhat sudden, not to say abrupt, considering how zealously as well as spontaneously it was started on his side. As I did not commence it, it is not my intention to revive it. If I had actually acceded to his proposals, I should have endeavoured to have placed my conduct in a satisfactory light before the President. The motives of it would not, I flatter myself, have been disapproved. But as the whole subject is now before my government, and as I shall do nothing further in it without instructions, I should deem it out of place to travel into any new reasons in support of a step not in fact taken.

Mr. Canning not having acceded to my proposal, nor I to his, we stand as we were before his first advance to me, with the exception only of the light which the intervening discussion may be supposed to have shed upon the dispositions and policy of England in this important matter. It appears that having ends of her own in view, she has been anxious to facilitate their accomplishment by invoking my auxiliary offices as the minister of the United States at this court; but as to the independence of the new states of America, for their own benefit, that this seems quite another question in her diplomacy. It is France that must not be aggrandized, not South America that must be made free. The former doctrine may fitly enough return upon Britain as part of her permanent political creed; but not having been taught to regard it as also incorporated with the foreign policy of the United States, I have forborne to give it gratuitous succour. I would have brought myself to minister to it incidentally on this occasion, only in return for a boon which it was in the power of Britain herself to have offered; a boon that might have closed the sufferings and brightened the prospects of those infant Republicks emerging from the new world, and seeming to be connected as by a great moral chain with our own destinies. . . .

[1] MS. Dispatches from Great Britain, XXIX.

Document 2 #12
Excerpts from Instructions to Richard Rush, November 29, 1823

John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, to Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain[1]

WASHINGTON, *November 29, 1823.*

Sir: Your despatches numbered 323-325-326-330-331-332-334 and 336 have been received; containing the reports of your conferences, and copies of your confidential correspondence, with Mr. Secretary Canning, in relation to certain proposals made by him, tending to a concert of principles, with reference to the affairs of South America, between the United States and Great Britain, and a combined manifestation of them to the world.

The whole subject has received the deliberate consideration of the President, under a deep impression of its genial importance, a full conviction of the high interests and sacred principles involved in it, and an anxious solicitude for the cultivation of that harmony of opinions and unity of object, between the British and American Nations, upon which so much of the peace and happiness and liberty of the world obviously depend.

I am directed to express to you the President's entire approbation of the course which you have pursued in referring to your Government the proposals contained in Mr. Canning's private and confidential letter to you, of 20 August; and I am now to signify the determination of the President concerning them: a determination which he wishes to be at once candid, explicit and conciliatory; and which being formed by refering each of the proposals to the single and unvarying standard of right and wrong, as understood and maintained by us, will present to the British Government the whole system of opinions and of purposes of the American Government with regard to South America.

The first of the *principles* of the British Government, as set forth by Mr. Canning, is-

1. We conceive the recovery of the colonies by Spain, to be hopeless. In this we concur. The second is-

2. We conceive the question of the recognition of them, as independent States, to be one of time and circumstances.

We *did* so conceive it, until with a due regard to all the rights of Spain, and with a due sense of our responsibility to the judgment of mankind, and of posterity, we had come to the conclusion that the recovery of them by Spain was *hopeless*. Having arrived at that conclusion, we considered that the people of these emancipated Colonies, were, *of right* independent of all other nations, and that it was our duty so to acknowledge them. We did so acknowledge them, in March, 1822; from which time the recognition has no longer been a question *to us*. We are aware of considerations, just and proper in themselves, which might deter Great Britain from fixing upon the same *time* for this recognition, with us; but we wish to press it earnestly upon her consideration, whether, after having settled the point that the recovery of the colonies by Spain was *hopeless*, and after maintaining, at the cannon's mouth, commercial relations with them, incompatible with their colonial condition, while subject to Spain, the *moral* obligation does not necessarily result of recognizing them as independent States.

"3. We are however, by no means disposed to throw any impediment in the way of an arrangement between them and the mother country by *amiable negociation*."

Nor are we--Recognizing them as independent States, we acknowledge them as possessing full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do.--Among these, an arrangement between them and Spain, by amicable negociation is one which far from being, disposed to impede we would earnestly desire, and, by every proper means in our power, endeavour to promote, provided it should be founded on the basis of independence. But recognizing them as independent States, we do, and shall justly and necessarily, claim in our relations political and commercial, to be placed upon a footing of equal favour, with the most favoured nation.

"4. We aim not at the possession of any portion of them ourselves"

"5. We would not see any portion of them transferred to any other Power, with indifference."

In both these positions we concur,-- and we add--

That we could not see with indifference, any attempt by one or more powers of Europe to restore those new states to the crown of Spain, or to deprive them, in any manner, whatever of the freedom and independence which they have acquired.

With a view to this object, it is indispensable that the British Government take like ground with that which is now held by the United States, and that it recognize the independence of the new Governments. That measure being taken, we may then harmonize in all the arrangements and acts which may be necessary for its accomplishment. It is upon this ground alone, as we conceive that a firm and determined stand could now be jointly taken by Great

Britain and the United States, in behalf of the *Independence of Nations*: and never, in the history of mankind, was there a period when a stand so taken and maintained, would exhibit to present and future ages, a more glorious example of power, animated by justice, and devoted to the ends of beneficence. On this basis this Government is

[1] MS. Instructions to United States Ministers, X, 120.

Document 2 #12

Excerpts from Instructions to Richard Rush, November 29, 1823, Page 2

willing to move in concert with Great Britain for the purposes specified.

We believe, however, that for the most effectual accomplishment of the object, common to both Governments, a perfect understanding with regard to it being established between them, it will be most advisable that they should act separately, each making such representations to the Continental European Allies, or either of them, as circumstances may render proper, and mutually communicating to each other, the purport of such representations, and all information respecting the measures and purposes of the Allies, the knowledge of which may enlighten the councils of Great Britain and of the United States, in the course of policy, and towards the honourable end, which will be common to them both. Should an emergency occur, in which a *joint* manifestation of opinion, by the two Governments may tend to influence the Councils of the European Allies, either in the aspect of persuasion or of admonition, you will make it known to us without delay, and we shall according to the principles of our Government, and in the forms prescribed by our Constitution, cheerfully join in any act by which we may contribute to support the cause of human freedom, and the Independence of the South American Nations.

I am [etc.].

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Document 2 # 13
Excerpts from Instructions to Richard Rush, November 30, 1823

John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, to Richard Rush, United States Minister to Great Britain

WASHINGTON, *November 30, 1823*[1]

SIR. The instructions contained in my letter, dated yesterday, were given with a view to enable you to return an explicit answer to the proposals contained in Mr. Secretary Canning's confidential letter to you of the 20th of August, last. The object of this despatch is to communicate to you, the views of the President with regard to a more general consideration of the affairs of South America, to serve for your government, and to be used according to your discretion in any further intercourse which you may have with the British Cabinet on this subject.

In reviewing the proposals of Mr. Canning, and the discussion of them in your correspondence and conferences, the President has, with great satisfaction, adverted to them in the light of an *overture* from the British Government towards a confidential concert of opinions and of operations between us and them, with reference to the countries heretofore subject to Spain in this Hemisphere. In the exposition of the *principles* of the British Government, as expressed in the five positions of Mr. Canning's letter, we perceive nothing with which we cannot cheerfully concur, with the exception of that which still considers the recognition of the independence of the Southern nations as a question of time and circumstances. Confident as we are, that the time is at hand when Great Britain, *to preserve* her own consistency, must come to this acknowledgment, we are aware that she may, perhaps, be desirous of reserving to herself the *whole* merit of it, with the South Americans, and that she may finally yield more readily, to the decisive act of recognition, when appearing to be spontaneous, than when urged upon her by *any* foreign suggestion. The point itself has been so earnestly pressed in your correspondence and conferences with Mr. Canning, and is so explicitly stated in my despatch of yesterday, as *indispensable*, in our view, towards a co-operation of the two Governments, upon this important interest, that the President does not think it necessary that you should dwell upon it with much solicitude. The objections exhibited by Mr. Canning against the measure, as stated particularly in your despatches, are so feeble, and your answers to them so conclusive that, after the distinct avowal of our sentiments, it may, perhaps, best conduce to the ultimate, *entire* coincidence of purposes between the two Governments, to leave the choice of *time* for the recognition which Mr. Canning has reserved, to the exclusive consideration of the British Ministers themselves.

We receive the proposals themselves, and all that has hitherto passed concerning them, according to the request of Mr. Canning, as *confidential*. As a first advance of that character which has ever been made by the British Government, in relation to the *foreign* affairs between the two nations, we would meet it, with cordiality, and with the true spirit of confidence, which is candour. The observations of Mr. Canning in reply to your remark that the policy of the United States has hitherto been entirely distinct and separate from all interference in the complications of European politics, have great weight, and the considerations involved in them had already been subjects of much deliberation among ourselves. As a member of the European community, Great Britain has relations with all the other powers of Europe, which the United States have not, and with which it is their unaltered determination not to interfere. But American affairs, whether of the Northern or of the Southern Continent, *can*, henceforth, not be excluded from the interference of the United States. All questions of policy relating to them, have a bearing so direct upon the rights and interests of the United States themselves, that they cannot be left at the disposal of European Powers, animated and directed, exclusively, by European principles and interests. Aware of the deep importance of United ends and Councils, with those of Great Britain in this emergency, we see no possible basis on which that harmonious concert of measures can be founded, other than the general principle of South American Independence. So long as Great Britain withholds the recognition of that, we may, as we certainly do, concur with her in the aversion to the transfer to any other power of any of the colonies in this Hemisphere, heretofore or yet, belonging to Spain; but the principles of that aversion, so far as they are common to both parties, resting only upon a casual coincidence of interests, in a national point of view *selfish* on both sides, would be liable to dissolution by every change of phase in the aspects of European politics. So that Great Britain, negociating at once with the European Alliance, and *with us*, concerning America, without, being bound by any permanent community of principle, with us would still be free to accommodate her policy to any of those distributions of power, and partitions of territory which have, for the last half century, been the ultima ratio of all European political arrangements; while we, bound to her by engagements, commensurate only with the momentary community of our separate, particular interests, and self-excluded from all

negociation with the European Alliance, should still be liable to see European Sovereigns dispose of American interests, without consultation, either with us, or with any of the American nations, over whose

[1] MS. Instructions to United States Minister, X, 125

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Document 2 # 13

Excerpts from Instructions to Richard Rush November 30, 1823, Page 2

destinies they would thus assume an arbitrary superintendence and control.

It was stated to you, by Mr. Canning that, in the event of a proposal for a European Congress to determine upon measures relating to South America, he should propose that you, as the Representative of the United States, should be invited to attend at the same, and that, in the case, either of a refusal to give you that invitation, or of your declining to accept it, if given, Great Britain would reserve to herself the right of declining also, to attend. The President approves your determination not to attend in case the invitation should be given; and we are not aware of any circumstances under which we should deem it expedient that a minister of the United States should be authorised to attend at such a Congress, if the invitation to that effect should be addressed to this Government itself. We should certainly decline attending, unless the South American Governments should also be invited to attend by *their* Representatives, and as the Representatives of Independent nations. We would not sanction by our presence any meeting of European Potentates to dispose of American Republics. We shall, if such meeting should take place, with a view to any result of hostile action, solemnly protest against it, and against all the melancholy and calamitous consequences which may result from it. We earnestly hope that Great Britain will do the same.

It has been observed that through the whole course of the correspondence, and of the conferences between Mr. Canning and you, he did not disclose the specific information upon which he apprehended so immediate an interposition of the European Allies, in the affairs of South America, as would have warranted or required the measure which he proposed to be taken in concert with you, before this Government could be advised of it. And this remark has drawn the more attention, upon observing the apparent coolness, and comparative indifference with which he treated the subject at your last conferences, after the peculiar earnestness and solemnity of his first advances. It would have been more satisfactory here, and would have afforded more distinct light for deliberation, if the confidence in which his proposals originated had at once been entire. This suggestion is now made with a view to the future, and to manifest the disposition, on our part, to meet and return confidence without reserve.

The circumstances of Mr. Gallatin's private concerns having induced him to decline returning to Europe at this time, and the posture of affairs requiring, in the opinion of the President, the immediate renewal of negociations with France, Mr. James Brown has been appointed to that mission, and is expected very shortly to proceed upon it.

I am [etc.]

Document 2 #14
Original of Page 1 of Rush to Adams, August 19, 1823

Recd 9th October.

No 323 London August 19. 1823

Sir

When my interview with Mr Canning on Saturday was about to close, I carelessly asked him whether, notwithstanding the late news from Spain, we might not still hope that the Spaniards would get the better of all their difficulties. I had allusion to the defection of Ballasteros, in Andalusia, an event seeming to threaten with new dangers the constitutional cause. His reply was general, importing nothing more than his opinion of the unmeasured difficulties and dangers with which, undoubtedly, this event was calculated to surround the Spanish cause.

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Honorable John Quincy Adams,
Secretary of State. 66

Document 2 #15
Original of Canning to Rush, August 20, 1823

Copy

Foreign Office
Aug. 20. 1823.

Private & Confidential.

My dear Sir.

Before leaving Town, I am desirous of bringing before you in a more distinct, but still in an unofficial and confidential, shape, the Question which we shortly discussed the last time that I had the pleasure of seeing you.

Is not the moment come when our Governments might understand each other as to the Spanish American Colonies? And if we can arrive at such an understanding, would it not be expedient for ourselves, and beneficial for all the world, that the principles of it should be clearly settled and plainly avowed?

For ourselves we have no disguise.

1. We conceive the recovery of the Colonies by Spain to be hopeless.

2. We conceive the question of the Recognition of them, as Independent States, to be one of time and circumstances.

3. We are however, by no means disposed to throw any impediment in the way

R. Rush Esqr.

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of an arrangement between them, and the mother country by amicable negotiation.

4. We aim not at the possession of any portion of them ourselves.

5. We could not see any portion of them transfered to any other Power, with indifference.

If these opinions and feelings are as I firmly believe them to be, common to your Government with ours, why should we hesitate mutually to confide them to each other: and to declare them in the face of the world?

If there be any European Power which cherishes other projects, which looks to a forcible enterprize for reducing the Colonies to subjugation, on the behalf or in the name of Spain; or which meditates the acquisition of any part of them to itself, by cession or by conquest; such a declaration on the part of your government and ours would be at once the most effectual and the least offensive mode of intimating our joint disapprobation of such projects.

It would at the same time put an end to all the jealousies of Spain with respect to her remaining Colonies and to the agitation which prevails in those Colonies, an agitation which it would be but humane to allay; being determined (as we are) not to profit by encouraging it—

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Do you conceive that under the power which you have recently received, you are authorized to enter into negotiation and to sign any Convention upon this subject? Do you conceive, if that be not within your competence. You could exchange with me Ministereal notes upon it?

Nothing could be more gratifying to me than to join with you in such a work, and am persuaded, there has seldom, in the history of the world, occurred an opportunity, when so small an effort, of two friendly Governments, might produce so unequivocal a good and prevent such extensive calamities.

I shall be absent from London but three weeks at the utmost: but never so far distant, but that I can receive and reply to any communication, written three or four days

I have the honor to be
my Dear Sir with great
respect & esteem Your
obedient & faithful
Servant

(Signed) George Canning

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Document 2 # 16
Original of Canning to Rush, August 23, 1823

Copy

Liverpool Aug. 23. 1823.

Private & Confidential.

My Dear Sir.

Since I wrote to you on the 20th, an additional motive has occurred for wishing that we might be able to come to some understanding on the part of our respective Governments on the subject of my letter: to come to it soon, and to be at liberty to announce it to the world.

It is this. I have received notice, but not such a notice as imposes upon me the necessity of any immediate answer or proceeding - that so soon as the military objects in Spain are achieved (of which the French expect, how justly I know not a very speedy achievement) a proposal will be made for a Congress, or some less formal concert and consultation, specially upon the affairs of Spanish America.

I need not point out to you all the complications to which this proposal, however dealt with by us, may lead.

Pray receive this communication in the same confidence with the former, and believe me with great truth and esteem

My Dear Sir Yesteem
your obedient &
faithful Servt

(Signed)
Geo Canning

R. Rush Esqr

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Document 2 # 17
Original of Page 1 of Rush to Canning, August 27, 1823

Ex City

London August 27 1823

My dear Sir

Your favor of the 23d, dated at Liverpool, got to hand yesterday, and I perceive in its contents new motives for attaching importance to the subject to which it relates.

In the note which I had the honor to address to you on the 23d, two principal ideas have place.

1. That the government of the United States earnestly desires to see maintained, permanently, the independence of the late Spanish provinces in America.

2. That it would view with unfeigned any attempt on the part of the powers of Europe to intrench upon that independence.

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The Right Hon:
George Canning,
&c &c &c

Document 2 #18
Original of Page 1 of Rush to Adams, August 28, 1823

Recd 9th October

No 326. London August 28. 1823

Sir.

Since my last despatch, I have received a second confidential note from Mr Canning, dated at Liverpool, the 23rd, a copy of which and of my answer, dated yesterday, are enclosed. The subject of our correspondence being, as appears to me, of deep interest, I think proper to apprise you of it from step to step, without waiting for the further developements to which it may possibly lead. I hence hope that this communication will be in time to accompany my last, in the packet ship that will leave Liverpool on the first of September.

Mr Canning having now distinctly

Honorable John Quincy Adams,
Secretary of State

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DOCUMENT 3

Selected Excerpts from the Memoirs of John Quincy Adams[1]

The selected passages from Adams' memoirs pertain to cabinet meetings and other discussions relating to the President's December 2 message to the Congress, often referred to simply as "the message." Many of the discussions also touch on how the U.S. should respond to overtures made by British Foreign Secretary Canning and correspondence received from the Russians[2]. Although called memoirs, these passages are from Adams' diary, which was written at the time rather than after the fact, thus making them more valuable as a historical tool. In many cases, Adams gives a running commentary of cabinet meetings with details about who said what about a particular issue. You will note that the excerpts relating to the president's message and Canning's overtures to Rush begin in late November although Rush first wrote to Adams about this in late August. The reason is simple: Rush's letters reporting on Canning's overtures were not received in Washington until October 9th. As a matter of fact, all of Rush's correspondence on this subject was received between October 9th and November 19th. Although the selected passages taken as a group give a complete picture of the debate at the time, teachers may, because of a lack of time, need to concentrate on one or two entries. If this is the case, it is recommended that the teacher focus on the excerpts from 11/25 and 11/26.

The memoirs, of course, are Adams-centric given that he is the author. Nevertheless, they provide an accurate description of the debate over what was to become one of the primary cornerstones of American foreign policy for centuries to come. It is clear from the memoirs exactly how few people were involved in the foreign policy decision-making process in 1823. Policy was debated and ultimately made by a mere handful of men, all of whom were very cognizant of George Washington's warning against permanent alliances. In addition to providing insight into the debate over policy, the memoirs also give some of the flavor of what life was like at the beginning of the 19th century. Although the language at times may be challenging, it is worth reading precisely because of the richness of the vocabulary and the eloquence of the author.

These passages lend themselves nicely to role plays involving the Cabinet members as they discuss the President's message to the Congress.

Excerpts

11/21 Cabinet meeting, discussion of President's message

11/22 Adams visits President Monroe to discuss instructions to Rush regarding the overture from the British that the U.S. and Britain work together vis-a-vis Spanish America

11/24 Adams discusses with U.S. Minister to France Gallatin and with President Monroe the latter's message to Congress

11/25 Discussions about how the U.S. should respond to Baron de Tuyl regarding the Russian interest in the northwest territories and discussion of the President's message

11/26 Continuation of the 11/25 discussion

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[1] From "Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Volume 6" edited by Charles Francis Adams (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), which was found in the Collections of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

[2] On October 16, 1823, Russian Baron de Tuyl wrote to Adams saying that due to the "political principles, which [the Emperor] pursues in common with his allies, he can not in any case receive near him any agent whatever, either of the administration of Colombia, or of any of the other Governments *de facto*, which owe their existence to events of which the new world has been for some years the theatre." (Hamilton, p. 390)

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Document 3
Excerpts from the Memoirs of John Quincy Adams

November 21st: ...**The President** approved of this idea; and then taking up the sketches that he had prepared for his message[1] read them to us. Its introduction was in a tone of deep solemnity and of high alarm, intimating that this country is menaced by imminent and formidable dangers, such as would probably soon call for their most vigorous energies and the closest union. It then proceeded to speak of the foreign affairs, chiefly according to the sketch I had given him some days since, but with occasional variations. It then alluded to the recent events in Spain and Portugal, speaking in terms of the most pointed reprobation of the late invasion of Spain by France, and of the principles upon which it was undertaken by the open avowal of the King of France. It also contained a broad acknowledgment of the Greeks as an independent nation, and a recommendation to Congress to make an appropriation for sending a Minister to them.

Of all this **Mr. Calhoun** declared his approbation. I **(Adams)** expressed as freely my wish that the President would reconsider the whole subject before he should determine to take that course. I said the tone of the introduction I apprehended would take the nation by surprise and greatly alarm them. It would come upon them like a clap of thunder. There had never been in the history of this nation a period of so deep calm and tranquillity as we now enjoyed. We never were, upon the whole, in a state of peace so profound and secure with all foreign nations as at this time. This message would be a summons to arms - to arms against all Europe, and for objects of policy exclusively European - Greece and Spain. It would be as new, too, in our policy as it would be surprising. For more than thirty years Europe had been in convulsions; every nation almost of which it is composed alternately invading and invaded. Empires, kingdoms, principalities, had been overthrown, revolutionized, and counter-revolutionized, and we had looked on safe in our distance beyond an intervening ocean and avowing a total forbearance to interfere in any of the combinations of European politics. This message would at once buckle on the harness and throw down the gauntlet. It would have the air of open defiance to all Europe, and I should not be surprised if the first answer to it from Spain and France, and even Russia, should be to break off their diplomatic intercourse with us. I did not expect that the quiet which we had enjoyed for six or seven years would last much longer. The aspect of things was portentous; but if we must come to an issue with Europe, let us keep it off as long as possible. Let us use all possible means to carry the opinion of the nation with us, and the opinion of the world.

Calhoun said that he thought there was not the tranquillity that I spoke of; that there was great anxiety in the thinking part of the nation; that there was a general expectation that the Holy Alliance would employ force against South America, and that it would be proper that the President should sound the alarm to the nation. A time was approaching when all its energies would be needed, and the public mind ought to be prepared for it.

The President told us confidentially that G. W. Erving had written praying that it might be kept secret, because whatever any person wrote there was reported back against him, but that, whatever might be reported here, we might set it down for certain that France and the allies would support Spain in the attempt to recover her Colonies by force.

I **(Adams)** observed to the President that I put very little reliance on anything written by G. W. Erving. It might or might not eventuate as he said; but he knew nothing about the matter more than was known to the world, and had views of his own in whatever he wrote.

Mr. Southard said little, but inclined towards my view of the subject.

The President finally said that he would draw up two sketches for consideration, conformable to the two different aspects of the subject. **The President and Mr. Calhoun** intimated the idea that there was a material difference in the wars and revolutions which since the year 1789 to this time have been raging in Europe, and this last invasion of Spain by France; that this was a more direct attack upon the popular principle; and that although no former message ever censured those overthrows and conquests before, yet it might be very proper to censure this now. The question, however, is deferred.

22d. I **(Adams)** finished the draft of my second dispatch to R. Rush[2] upon Canning's proposals. And there must be yet a third. I also began a written statement of what has passed between Baron de Tuyl and me concerning the intentions of the Russian Cabinet, with a view to transmit copies of it and of the documents to Mr. Middleton[3] and Mr. Rush. Mr. Gallatin[4] was with the President, but withdrew on my going in. I left with the President my draft for a second dispatch to R. Rush on South American affairs. And I spoke to him again urging him to abstain from everything in his message which the Holy Allies could make a pretext for construing into aggression upon them. I said there were considerations of weight which I could not even easily mention at a Cabinet meeting. If he had determined to retire from the public service at the end of his present term, it was now drawing to a close. It was to be considered now as a whole, and a system of administration for a definite term of years. It would

1 This is the first substantive discussion about the President's upcoming message to the Congress in which he lays out what became known as the Monroe Doctrine.

2 Richard Rush was the U.S. Minister to Great Britain.
3 Mr. Middleton was the U.S. Minister to Russia.
4 Mr. Gallatin was the U.S. Minister to France.

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Excerpts from the Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Page 2

hereafter, I believed, be looked back to as the golden age of this republic, and I felt an extreme solicitude that its end might correspond with the character of its progress; that the Administration might be delivered into the hands of the successor, whoever he might be, at peace and in amity with all the world. If this could not be, if the Holy Alliance were determined to make up an issue with us, it was our policy to meet, and not to make it. We should retreat to the wall before taking to arms, and be sure at every step to put them as much as possible in the wrong. I said if the Holy Alliance really intended to restore by force the Colonies of Spain to her dominion, it was questionable to me whether we had not, after all, been over-hasty in acknowledging the South American independence. It had pledged us now to take ground which we had not felt at all bound to take five years ago. At the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle the allies had discussed what they should do with South America, and we had not even thought of interfering with them. If they intend now to interpose by force, we shall have as much as we can do to prevent them, without going to bid them defiance in the heart of Europe. Something had been said yesterday, that if the President did not recommend the recognition of the independence of the Greeks it would be pressed in the House of Representatives. What would be Mr. Clay's course in this case I could not foresee. But he (the President) well knew that at the time when Mr. Clay so urgently pushed for the South American independence, his main object was popularity for himself and to embarrass the Administration. It did not appear that this object was now so important to him, and, as he had some prospect of coming to the succession himself, I should not suppose he would wish it encumbered with a quarrel with all Europe. But, be that as it may, it was infinitely better that the impulse should come from Congress than that it should go from the Executive. Congress are responsible for their own acts. Foreign powers are apt to take less notice of them than of Executive measures, and if they put us in attitudes of hostility with the allies, be the blame upon them. The ground that I wish to take is that of earnest remonstrance against the interference of the European powers by force with South America, but to disclaim all interference on our part with Europe; to make an American cause, and adhere inflexibly to that.

The President said he had spoken of the Greeks and of the Spaniards in his last year's message. I **(Adams)** said I should not object to paragraphs of a like description, in general terms and pledging nothing, but I would be specially careful to avoid anything which may be construed as hostility to the allies. He **(The President)** said he would fully consider what he should say, and when prepared with his draft would call a meeting of the members of the Administration.

24th. ....I called at the President's, and found Mr. Gallatin with him. .... After he withdrew, **the President** read me his paragraphs respecting the Greeks, Spain, Portugal, and South America. I **(Adams)** thought them quite unexceptionable, and

drawn up altogether in the spirit that I had so urgently pressed on Friday and Saturday. I was highly gratified at the change, and only hope the President will adhere to his present views.

25th. I **(Adams)** made a draft of observations upon the communications recently received from the Baron de Tuyl, the Russian Minister. Took the paper, together with the statement I had prepared of what has passed between him and me, and all the papers received from him, to the President. I found General Swartwout, of New York, with him, but he immediately withdrew. Mr. Southard just then came in, and the President sent for the other members of the Administration, Mr. Calhoun and Mr. Wirt. Mr. Crawford continues convalescent, but was not well enough to attend. *My proposal was that a paper like that which I had prepared, modified as the President should finally direct, be delivered by me to the Baron de Tuyl in the form of an unofficial verbal note*, that I should invite him to a conference, then read the paper to him, deliver to him a copy of it, and tell him that I was willing to converse with him concerning it if he thought proper. *The paper itself was drawn to correspond exactly with a paragraph of the President's message which he had read me yesterday*, and which was entirely conformable to the system of policy which I have earnestly recommended for this emergency. *It was also intended as a firm, spirited, and yet conciliatory answer to all the communications lately received from the Russian Government, and at the same time an unequivocal answer to the proposals made by Canning to Mr. Rush.* It was meant also to be eventually an exposition of the principles of this Government, and a brief development of its political system as henceforth to be maintained: essentially republican - maintaining its own independence, and respecting that of others; essentially pacific - studiously avoiding all involvement in the combinations of European politics, cultivating peace and friendship with the most absolute monarchies, highly appreciating and anxiously desirous of retaining that of the Emperor Alexander, but declaring that, having recognized the independence of the South American States, we could not see with indifference any attempt by European powers by forcible interposition either to restore the Spanish dominion on the American Continents or to introduce monarchical principles into those countries, or to transfer any portion of the ancient or present American possessions of Spain to any other European power. (emphasis added by editer)

This paper was read, and thereupon ensued a desultory discussion till near five o'clock, when the President adjourned the meeting till twelve o'clock tomorrow. **Calhoun**, with many professions of diffidence and doubt, but only to prompt discussion, questioned whether it would be proper to deliver any such paper to the Russian Minister. The paper contained rather an ostentatious display of republican principles; it was making up an issue, perhaps too soon, with the Holy Alliance. It would

Document 3
Excerpts from the Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Page 3

perhaps be offensive to the Emperor of Russia, and perhaps even to the British Government, which would by no means relish so much republicanism. He thought it would be sufficient to communicate to Baron Tuyl a copy of the paragraph of the President's message to which my paper was adapted. The message was a mere communication to our own people. Foreign powers might not feel themselves bound to notice what was said in that. It was like a family talking over subjects interesting to them by the fireside among themselves. Many things might be said there without offence, even if a stranger should come among them and overhear the conversation, which would be offensive if they went to his house to say them.

Southard and Wirt both observed that according to that allusion it was Russia, it was the Holy Alliance, who had come to our house to proclaim the virtues and the glories of despotism; and my paper was nothing more than an answer to them.

Calhoun said he thought my paper went rather farther than theirs.

I **(Adams)** observed that a copy of that paragraph of the President's message might suffice for an indication of our principles, but I thought it due to the honor and dignity of the nation that an explicit and direct answer should be given to the communications from the Russian Government. After receiving, one upon the back of another, so many broad hints from them, the people of this country, when they come to the knowledge of it, will ask what was said in answer to them. The answer to the written notification of the Emperor's determination not to receive any Minister from South America was the tamest of all State papers. The first draft of it had been softened first at a Cabinet meeting then by an amended draft of the President, and finally by an amendment of mine upon that of the President. The answers to the notification of the Emperor's hope and wish that the United States would continue their neutrality between Spain and South America were merely verbal. We had no written vouchers of them but in the copies confidentially given by the Baron to me of his dispatches to his Court concerning them. Then came this last extract of 30th August, 1823, bearding us to our faces upon the monarchical principles of the Holy Alliance. It was time to tender them an issue. In the last resort, this was a cause to be pleaded before the world of mankind. Our country, and the world, would require that our ground should be distinctly taken, as well as resolutely maintained. Now, in my belief, was the time for taking it; and as I thought the Holy Alliance would not ultimately invade South America, and firmly believed that the Emperor Alexander did not mean to include us, or any consideration of us, in his invectives against revolution, I wished to give him an opportunity of disclaiming any such intention. I believed the Emperor Alexander was honestly wedded to his system; that he was profoundly penetrated with the conviction that he was laboring for the good of his people and for the welfare of mankind. There was no man living more sensitive to public opinion; as I knew from a multitude of proofs, but which was eminently shown by the importance which the Government itself attached to the editorial article in the National Intelligencer, which, at the instance of the Baron de Tuyl, I had caused to be inserted, concerning the Northwest Coast question. My object in this paper was to appeal much to the personal feelings of the Emperor Alexander: to his love of peace; to his religious impressions; to his sensibility to public opinion; to his old friendly offices and good will towards the United States. I would search all these sources of action, and bring him either to a formal disavowal of any dispositions unfriendly to the United States, or to an express declaration of what his intentions are.

Calhoun's objections were not supported; but **Mr. Wirt** made a question far more important, and which I had made at a much earlier stage of these deliberations. It was, whether we shall be warranted in taking so broadly the ground of resistance to the interposition of the Holy Alliance by force to restore the Spanish dominion in South America. It is, and has been, to me a fearful question. It was not now discussed; but Mr. Wirt remarked upon the danger of assuming the attitude of menace without meaning to strike, and asked, if the Holy Allies *should* act in direct hostility against South America, whether this country would oppose them by war? My paper and the paragraph would certainly commit us as far as the Executive constitutionally could act on this point; and if we take this course, I should wish that a joint resolution of the two Houses of Congress should be proposed and adopted to the same purport. But this would render it necessary to communicate to them, at least confidentially, the existing state of things. The communications from Mr. Canning were all, at his own request, confidential. Those with Baron de Tuyl were yet so, but *he* was desirous that part of them should be published, and I was yet to settle with him whether they should be communicated to Congress. My wish was to propose to him that they should all be communicated, and also that the substance of them should be communicated to Mr. Greuhm, the Prussian Minister here, for his Court; the King of Prussia being one of the members of the Holy Alliance.

The President did not finally decide upon the point of Mr. Calhoun's objection to the delivery of *any* paper to Baron Tuyl, but retained my draft and the statement of the transactions between the Baron and me, to resume the consideration of them tomorrow.

Mr. Wirt objected strongly to one paragraph of my draft, which, he said, was a hornet of a paragraph, and, he thought, would be excessively offensive.

I **(Adams)** said it was the cream of my paper; but I am sure the President will not suffer it to pass. **The President** seemed to entertain some apprehension that the republicanism of my paper might indispose the British Government to a cordial concert of operations with us. He said they were in a dilemma between their anti-Jacobin policy, the dread of their internal reformers, which made them sympathize with the Holy Allies, and the necessities of their commerce and revenue, with the pressure of their debts and taxes, which compelled them to side with South American independence for the sake of South American trade. He believed they must ultimately

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Excerpts from the Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Page 4

take this side, but if we should shock and alarm them upon the political side of the question, and the Holy Allies could hold out to them anything to appease the craving of their commercial and fiscal interest, they might go back to the allies -- as Portugal has gone back - insignificant and despised, but leaving us in the lurch, with all Europe against us.

I replied that, at all events, nothing that we should now do would commit us to absolute war, that Great Britain was already committed more than we; that the interest of no one of the allied powers would be promoted by the restoration of South America to Spain, that the interest of each one of them was against it, and that if they could possibly agree among themselves upon a partition principle, the only possible bait they could offer to Great Britain for acceding to it was Cuba, which neither they nor Spain would consent to give her; that my reliance upon the co-operation of Great Britain rested not upon her principles, but her interest -- this I thought was clear; but that my paper came in conflict with no principle which she would dare to maintain. We avowed republicanism, but we disclaimed propagandism; we asserted national independence to which she was already fully pledged. We disavowed all interference with European affairs, and my whole paper was drawn up to come in conclusion precisely to the identical declaration of Mr. Canning himself, and to express our concurrence with it.

Mr. Southard and Mr. Wirt supported me in these remarks.

26th ... I attended the adjourned Cabinet meeting at the President's, from half-past twelve - four hours. At the President's request, I read the statement of what has passed between Baron Tuyl and me since the 16th of last month, and then my proposed draft of observations upon the communications recently received from him. The President then read the draft of the corresponding paragraph for his message to Congress, and asked whether it should form part of the message. I took a review of the preceding transactions of the Cabinet meetings; remarking that the present questions had originated in a draft which he had presented merely for consideration, of an introduction to the message of unusual solemnity, indicating extraordinary concern, and even alarm, at the existing state of things, coupled with two paragraphs, one containing strong and pointed censure upon France and the Holy Allies for the invasion of Spain, and the other recommending all appropriation for a Minister to send to the Greeks, and in substance recognizing them as independent; that the course now proposed is a substitute for that, and that it is founded upon the idea that if an issue must be made up between us and the Holy Alliance it ought to be upon grounds exclusively American, that we should separate it from all European concerns, disclaim all intention of interfering with these, and make the stand altogether for an American cause; that at the same time the answer to be given to the Russian communications should be used as the means of answering also the proposals of Mr. George Canning, and of assuming the attitude to be maintained by the United States with reference to the designs of the Holy Alliance upon South America. This being premised, I observed that the whole of the papers now drawn up were but various parts of one system under consideration, and the only really important question to be determined, as it appeared to me, was that yesterday made by **Mr. Wirt**, and which had been incidentally discussed before, namely, whether we ought at all to take this attitude as regards South America; whether we get any advantage by committing ourselves to a course of opposition against the Holy Alliance. My own mind **(Adams')** indeed, is made up that we ought thus far to take this stand; but I thought it deserved great deliberation, and ought not to be taken without a full and serious estimate of consequences.

Mr. Wirt then resumed the objection he had taken yesterday, and freely enlarged upon it. He said he did not think this country would support the Government in a war for the independence of South America. There had never been much general excitement in their favor. Some part of the people of the interior had felt warmly for them, but it never had been general, and never had there been a moment when the people thought of supporting them by war. To menace without intending to strike was neither consistent with the honor nor the dignity of the Country. It was possible that the proposals of Mr. Canning themselves were traps laid to ensnare us into public declarations against the Holy Allies, without intending even to take part against them; that if we were to be so far committed, all the documents ought to be communicated to Congress, and they ought to manifest their sentiments in the form of resolutions, and that the Executive ought not to pledge the honor of the nation to war without taking the sense of the country with them.

Mr. Calhoun supported the other view of the question. He said the great object of the measure was to detach Great Britain definitively from the Holy Alliance. Great Britain would not, could not, resist them alone, we remaining neutral. She would fall eventually into their views, and the South Americans would be subdued. The next step the allies would then take would be against ourselves - to put down what had been called the first example of successful democratic rebellion. It was probable that by taking the stand now the Holy Alliance would be deterred from any forcible interposition with South America; but if not, we ought to sustain the ground now taken, even to the extent of war. There was danger in both alternatives; but the immediate danger was light, the contingent one to be averted was formidable in the extreme. It was wisdom in this, as in many of the occurrences of life, public and private, to incur the light hazard for the purpose of warding off the great one. And as this was the wise course, he had no doubt it would be sustained by the people of this country, if the exigency should require it. They would always sustain the wisest course when it was properly explained to them. He did believe that the Holy Allies had an ultimate eye to us; that they would, if not resisted, subdue South America. He

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had no doubt they would retain the country in subjection by military force. Success would give them partisans. Violent parties would arise in this country, one for and one against them, and we should have to fight upon our own shores for our own institutions. He was therefore in favor of the President's message with the proposed paragraph. But he thought a copy of it might be delivered to Baron Tuyl, with notice that it was to be considered as the answer to the communications recently received from him. The paragraph in the message said in substance the same as the draft of the paper; but the message was a talk among ourselves, which foreigners might be told they have no right to take notice of. To say the same thing directly to him might be offensive. There was more development in my draft. There was an ostentatious display of republican *contrasted* with monarchical principles, always showing the superiority of the former. If he consulted his personal inclination, he should be in favor of the draft. He had no doubt that our own people would be delighted with it, but he believed it would be deeply offensive to the Holy Allies, and also to the British Government, who, with regard to monarchical principles, would sympathize entirely with them.

I **(Adams)** said, with regard to the objections of Mr. Wirt, that I considered them of the deepest moment. I was glad they had been made, and trusted the President would give them full consideration before coming to his definitive decision. If they prevailed, neither the paragraph in the message nor my draft would be proper. The draft was prepared precisely to correspond with the paragraph in the message. I did believe, however, that both would be proper and necessary. Not that I supposed that the Holy Alliance had any intention of ultimately attacking us, or meant to establish monarchy among us. But if they should really invade South America, and especially Mexico, it was impossible, in the nature of things, that they should do it to restore the old exclusive dominion of Spain. Spain had not, and never could again have, the physical force to maintain that dominion and if the countries should be kept in subjugation by the armies of the Allies, was it in human absurdity to imagine that they should waste their blood and treasure to prohibit their own subjects upon pain of death to set foot upon those territories? Surely not. If then the Holy Allies should subdue Spanish America, however they might at first set up the standard of Spain, the ultimate result of their undertaking would be to recolonize them, partitioned out among themselves. Russia might take California, Peru, Chili; France, Mexico -- where we know she has been intriguing to get a monarchy under a Prince of the House of Bourbon, as well as at Buenos Ayres. And Great Britain, as her last resort, if she could not resist this course of things, would take at least the island of Cuba for her share of the scramble. Then what would be our situation -- England holding Cuba, France Mexico? And Mr. Gallatin had told me within these four days that Hyde de Neuville had said to him, in the presence and hearing of ten or twelve persons, that if we did not yield to the claim of France under the eighth article of the

Louisiana Convention, she ought to go and take the Country, and that she had a strong party there. The danger, therefore, was brought to our own doors, and I thought we could not too soon take our stand to repel it.

There was another point of view, which the President had in part suggested, and which I thought highly important. Suppose the Holy Allies should attack South America, and Great Britain should resist them alone and without our cooperation. I thought this not an improbable contingency, and I believed in such a struggle the allies would be defeated and Great Britain would be victorious, by her command of the sea. But, as the independence of the South Americans would then be only protected by the guarantee of Great Britain, it would throw them completely into her arms, and in the result make them her Colonies instead of those of Spain. My opinion was, therefore, that we must act promptly and decisively. But the act of the Executive could not, after all, commit the nation to a pledge of war. Nor was war contemplated by the proposals of Mr. Canning. He had explicitly stated to Mr. Rush from the beginning that his object was merely a concerted expression of sentiment, which he supposed would avert the necessity of war; and, as Great Britain was not and would not be pledged, by anything Mr. Canning had said or proposed, to war, so would anything now done by the Executive here leave Congress free hereafter to act or not, according as the circumstances of the emergency may require. With regard to the point made by Mr. Calhoun, my opinion was directly opposite to that which he had expressed. The communications from the Russian Minister required a direct and explicit answer. A communication of the paragraph in the President's message would be no answer, and if given as an answer would certainly be very inconsistent with the position that foreigners have no right to notice it, because it was all said among ourselves. This would be precisely as if a stranger should come to me with a formal and insulting display of his principles in the management of his family and his conduct towards his neighbors, knowing them to be opposite to mine, and as if I, instead of turning upon him and answering him face to face, should turn to my own family and discourse to them upon my principles and conduct, with sharp innuendoes upon those of the stranger, and then say to him, "There! take that for your answer. And yet you have no right to notice it; for it was only said to my own family, and behind your back." I thought as the Holy Alliance had come to edify and instruct us with their principles, it was due in candor to them, and in justice to ourselves, to return them the compliment. And if the people of our country should hereafter know, as they must, how much good advice the Emperor Alexander has been giving us in private, they would not be satisfied to be told that the only return we had made to him for it was to send him a copy of the President's message to Congress. I felt the more solicitude that a direct and explicit answer should be given him, because the Baron in one of his dispatches had intimated that I had expressed not only an earnest desire that we might remain on good terms with Russia, but high opinions of the Emperor's

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moderation. In my report of the conferences, I had stated what was said by me, and from which the Baron had drawn his inference. I had told him that, having, while residing at his Court, witnessed the many acts of friendship for the United States of the Emperor Alexander, I had formed sentiments of high respect for his character, and even of personal attachment to him. This was true. I thought better of him than perhaps any other person at this meeting; and I did not believe there was one word in my draft that would give him offence. The avowal of principles connected with the disclaimer of interference in European affairs, of proselytism, and of hostile purposes, could not offend him. I thought it most essential. I was willing to agree to any modification which might be thought advisable, but the distinct avowal of principle appeared to me to be absolutely required. The paper acknowledged that we were aware the monarchical principle of government was different from ours, but it declared that we saw no reason why they should not be at peace with each other, and that we earnestly desired that peace. The Emperor's reply might be, that he desired equally that peace; that by the invasion of Spain the allies meant to interfere neither with the liberty nor the independence of Spain; that the Spanish nation was with them, and that they had only put down a faction, originating in and supported by military mutiny, which the allies would not recognize.

Mr. Southard and Mr. Wirt both declared that they thought a distinct and direct answer should be given to the Russian communications. But they scrutinized and objected to many of the details of the paper. **Wirt,** referring again to the paragraph which he had yesterday called a hornet, said it reminded him of a Virginian who declared his principle was that if a man gave him a fillip on the nose he would knock him down with a brickbat. **Southard** objected to the admission that we were aware the monarchical principle of government differed from ours, after stating that ours were principles of liberty, independence, and peace. I said that the details of the paper were entirely at the disposal of the President; that in drawing it up my object had been to make it as close, compact, and significant as possible, that every part of it was connected with the whole, and that from the first line to the last I meant all should bear upon the declaration with which it concludes -- the answer at once to Russia and Great Britain.

Southard said he had distinctly perceived that was the object of the paper. **The President** retained the paper, to determine finally upon it tomorrow morning. He approved the draft of the second dispatch, prepared for R. Rush, but enquired what was the particular meaning of one paragraph in the first. I told him that was for me to ask of him, as it was a paragraph in the amendment drawn by himself, and in his own words, at which he heartily laughed. He desired me however, finally to modify the dispatches to it. Rush, so as not to refuse cooperating with Great Britain even if she should yet demur to the recognition of South American independence.

DOCUMENT 4

Letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe
Dated, October 24, 1823

After receiving reports of British Foreign Minister George Canning's proposals that the United States and Britain jointly condemn European efforts to reestablish Spanish domination in South America, President Monroe wrote to two former presidents, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) and James Madison (1758-1831) to seek their advice. While both men urged President Monroe to cooperate with Great Britain, Jefferson also stressed the importance of two cornerstones of American foreign policy: non-involvement in European affairs and intolerance of European meddling in America.

The text of Jefferson's letter, as taken from the Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress, is transcribed below along with a facsimile of the first page of the letter. As you will see, letters written at that time were hand-written and contained some words that are no longer in use. Note also the old spelling of certain words.

Jefferson's letter is impressive because of the breadth of knowledge displayed and the eloquence with which he was able to express himself. His summary of the situation facing America in the early 19th century is a must read for any history student.

Begin transcript of letter:

Monticello Oct. 24, '23

Dear Sir

The question presented by the letter you have sent me is the most momentous which has been ever offered to my contemplation since that of independence. That made us a nation; this sets our compass and points the course which we are to steer thro' the ocean of time opening on us and never could we embark on it under circumstances more auspicious. Our first and fundamental maxim should be never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with Cis-Atlantic affairs. America, North and South has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe, and peculiarly her own. She should therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe. While the last is laboring to become the domicil of despotism our endeavor should surely be to make our hemisphere that of freedom. One nation, most of all, could disturb us in this pursuit; she now offers to lead, aid, and accompany us in it. By acceding to her proposition, we detach her from the band of despots, bring her mighty weight into the scale of free government, and emancipate a continent at one stroke, which might otherwise linger long in doubt and difficulty. Great Britain is the nation which can do us the most harm of anyone, or all , on earth; and with her on our side we need not fear the whole world. With her then we should the most sedulously cherish a cordial friendship; and nothing should tend more to limit our affections than to be fighting once more, side by side, in the same cause. Not that I would purchase even her amity at the price of taking part in her wars. But the war in which the present proposition might engage us, should that be it's consequence, is not her war, but ours. It's object is to introduce and establish the American system, of keeping out of our land all foreign powers, of never permitting those of Europe to intermeddle with the affairs of our nations. It is to maintain our own principle not to depart from it. And if, to facilitate this, we can effect a division in the body of the European powers, and draw over to our side it's most powerful member, surely we should do it. But I am clearly of Mr. Canning's opinion that it will prevent, instead of provoking war. With Great Britain withdrawn from their scale and shifted into that of our two continents, all Europe combined would not undertake such a war. For how would they propose to get at either enemy without superior fleets? Nor is the occasion to be slighted which this proposition offers of declaring our protest against the atrocious violations of the rights of nations, by the interference of any one in the internal affairs of another so flagitiously begun by Bonaparte and now continued by the equally lawless alliance, calling itself Holy.

But we have first to ask ourselves a question. Do we wish to acquire to our own Confederacy any one or more of the Spanish provinces? I candidly confess that I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of states. The controul which, with Florida point this island would give us over the Gulph of Mexico, and the countries, and the isthmus bordering on it, as well as all those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being. Yet, as I am sensible that this can never be obtained, even with her own consent, but by war, and it's independence, which is our second interest (and especially its independence of England) can be secured without it. I have no hesitation in abandoning my first wish to future chances, and accepting its independence with peace, and the friendship of England, rather than its association at the expence of war and her enmity.

I could honestly therefore join in the declaration proposed that we aim not at the acquisition of any of those possessions, that we will not stand in the way of any amicable arrangement between any of them and the mother country, but that we will oppose, with all our means, the forcible interposition of any other power, either as auxiliary, stipendiary, or under any other form or pretext, and most especially their transfer to any power, by conquest, cession, or acquisition in any other way.

I should think it therefore advisable that the Executive should encourage the British government to a continuance in the dispositions expressed in these letters by an assurance of his concurrence with them as far as his authority goes, and that as it may lead to war, the declaration of which requires an act of Congress, the case shall be laid before them for consideration at their first meeting, and under the reasonable aspect in which it is seen by himself.

I have been so long weaned from political subjects, and have as long ceased to take any interest in them, that I am sensible that I am not qualified to offer opinions worthy of any attention. But the question now proposed involves consequences so lasting, and effects so decisive of our future destinies as to kindle all the interest I have heretofore felt on these occasions, and to induce me to the hazard of opinions, which will prove my wish only to contribute still my mite towards anything which may be useful to our country. And praying you to accept it at only what it is worth, I add the assurance of my constant and affectionate friendship and respect.

Th Jefferson

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Document 4

Original of Page 1 of Jefferson to Monroe, October 24, 1823

Dear Sir — Monticello Oct. 24. 23.

The question presented by the letters you have sent me is the most momentous which has been ever offered to my contemplation since that of Independence. that made us a nation, this sets our compass and points the course which we are to steer thro' the ocean of time opening on us. and never could we embark on it under circumstances more auspicious. our first and fundamental maxim should be never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. our second never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with Cis-Atlantic affairs. America, North and South has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe, and peculiarly her own. she should therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe. while the last is labouring to become the domicil of despotism our endeavor should surely be to make our hemisphere that of freedom. one nation, most of all, could disturb us in this pursuit; she now offers to lead, aid, and accompany us in it. by acceding to her proposition, we detach her from the band of despots, bring her mighty weight into the scale of free government, and emancipate, at one stroke a continent which might otherwise linger long in doubt and difficulty. Great Britain is the nation which can do us the most harm of any one, or all on earth; and with her on our side we need not fear the whole world: with her then we should the most sedulously cherish a cordial friendship; and nothing would tend more to knit our affections than to be fighting once more, side by side, in the same cause. not that I would purchase even her friendship at the price of taking part in her wars. but the war in which the present proposition might engage us, should that be its consequence is not her war, but ours. it's object is to introduce & establish the American system of keeping out of our land all foreign powers, of never permitting those of Europe to intermeddle with the affairs of our nations. it is to maintain our own principles not to depart from it. and if, to facilitate this, we can effect a division in the body

President Monroe.

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Document 5

Editorial from the Salem Gazette, December 12, 1823

The following article is a fairly cynical summary of the views of various newspapers regarding President Monroe's December 2, 1823 message to the Congress. As you will notice, the President's message was generally well received.

Do you think the President's message deserved all of the praise it received?

Salem

FRIDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 12, 1823.

We should judge from the current of editorial remarks in the newspapers on the President's Message, that any thing but gross flattery and abject servility was now a crime, and that every man who should venture a free remark upon any thing issuing from the presidential throne would chance to raise against him the old French republican cry of *A la Lanterne!* Will any one believe, that the sensible editors of the National Gazette, N. Y. American, &c. &c really and soberly think thus highly of the Message as they have expressed themselves? The N. Y. American indeed says it is *the best Message Mr. Monroe ever communicated*, which is not saying much for it; but then he concludes it is one we may be *proud* of! Mr. Walsh, of the N. Gaz. notwithstanding all his flattering unction, begins his remarks with a kind of exception ["for the *most part*"] and concludes with a passage of bitter sneering at the President for his "simpering fraternity" with the Emperor of Russia, and with unqualified censure of his "timidity," "selfishness," want of "generous feelings," &c. The N. Journal, setting no bounds to its ridiculous flattery, throws Washington, Adams, Jefferson and Madison all into the shade, and pronounces this Message, "in matter, manner, sentiment and style, the *best* that ever came from the Executive." This, in the old phrase, needs no comment. As to the dreadful anathema pronounced by the Register against the Gazette, in regard to this subject, it is truly appalling!